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See Tenth Page of this number.

"WHAT IS HER SURPRISE, ON REACHING THE SPOT, TO FIND THAT IT IS NOT AT HER DISPOSAL."

"NO INTENTIONS."

BY FLORENCE MARRYAT.

Author of "Love's Conflict," "Veronique," etc.

CHAPTER V.

It is on a glorious July afternoon that Colonel Mordaunt brings his wife to Fen Court. There is no railway station within ten miles of Priestly, but an open carriage meets them on arrival at the nearest town, and as they roll homewards through long country lanes, bordered with hedges in which the bramble flower and the woodbine have joined issue to pull the wild roses and the purple nightshade to the ground, Irene experiences a sense of silent calm which makes her believe that she has at last breasted successfully the billows of life, and emerged thence with the greatest good this world affords us in her hand—contentment! They have had a long and tedious journey from Weymouth; the sun has been inconveniently warm, and the railway carriages filled with dust, and even good-natured people might be excused from of day; but Irene and Colonel Mordaunt seem admirably fitted to get on together. She is all gentle acquiescence to anything he may propose feeling a little peevish or impatient by the close (gratitude and indifference being the principal ingredients in submission), and he is devoted to his young wife, and has spent his time hitherto in anticipating her wishes, but in a manner so unobtrusive as to have rendered even the honeymoon agreeable to her. For, whatever may be the general opinion to the contrary, the honeymoon is not always the happiest part of married life; indeed there are few instances of it in which both husband and wife are not secretly pleased when it is drawing to a close. Brides who are worshipped as divinities during the first week are apt to become *exigeantes* during the last three, and bride-grooms are sometimes forced to confess the melancholy truth that "the full soul loatheth the honey-comb." I have known a seven days' wife cry all the afternoon because her husband went to sleep on the sofa; and a freshly-made Benedict plead law, sickness, business, anything, in order to procure a run up to town during the fatal moon, and a few hours' cessation from the continuous tax laid on his patience, gallantry, and temper. Many a married life that has ended in misery might have flowed on evenly enough had it not been for the injury done to a woman's character during that month of blandishments and folly. It requires a strong mind to accept at their true worth all the nonsense a man talks and all the foolish actions of which he is guilty during those first rapturous moments of possession—and women, as a rule, are not strong-minded. All the hyperbole of passion, which until then they have only heard in furtive lovers' whispers, is now poured out boldly at their feet, and the geese imagine it to be a specimen or a promise of what their future life shall be. A fortnight sees the ardor cooled; in a month it has evaporated, and thenceforth they are judged, not as goddesses, but women. How few stand the test and can step down gracefully from the pedestal on which they have been unnaturally exalted to the level of their husbands' hearts, let the lives of our married acquaintances answer for us. But whether it would prevent the final issue or not, it is nevertheless true that the happiness of many a man and woman would not come so quickly to a close, were the latter treated with a little more discretion during the honeymoon. As husbands intend to go on so should they begin. A woman is a suspicious animal; her experience is small, her views are narrow, her range of sight limited; and more men have been whined and teased and irritated out of their love than stormed out of it. There is no more miserable mistake in life than to attempt to warm up a fading: *réchauffés* are never worth much, but this style of *réchauffé* pays the worst of all. If wifes would be reasonable, they will take all that is offered them; but never stoop to extract an unwilling avowal of affection, which will burn none the brighter for being dragged to the light of day. A little happy indifference is the best possible medicine for a drooping love; and the injunction to "leave them alone and they'll come home," holds as good with men as with the flock of Bo-peep. Irene Mordaunt bids fair to keep her husband's devotion in a healthy condition by this means. Her manner towards him is as sweet and gentle as it can be, but it naturally possesses no ardor; and this want of passion on her part is just sufficient to keep his middle-aged flame burning very brightly, without giving him any anxiety on account of hers.

He would have preferred, like other men, to make a fool of himself during the honeymoon (and the adage that "there is no fool like an old fool" holds truer in love than any other feeling) but something in Irene's quiet and sensible manner has forbidden it, and compelled him to treat her as if they had been married for several

years. And yet she is not cold to him — she does not repulse his attentions nor refuse to acknowledge them; on the contrary, as they commence their drive to Priestly, and he wraps a shawl about her feet, and makes her put them upon the opposite seat, the smile with which she thanks him would be sufficient to put a younger man "off his head."

"How beautiful the country is!" she says, as they pass fields of clean-shorn sheep, and rosy children bobbing curtseys by the cottage gates, and waggons of late-gathered hay breathing "odors of Araby" as they crawl by; "how sweet and clean everything looks and smells. Philip, I long to see the garden; I am so fond of flowers. Do you remember the lovely bouquets you used to send me in Brussels?"

"Perfectly, my darling" (Colonel Mordaunt seldom calls his wife anything but "darling," and the word has ceased to grate on her ears as it did at first, recalling the lost voice that spoke it once); "and how you used to turn your nose up at my humble offerings."

"I never told you so, Philip; that must be an invention of your own."

"Perhaps I divined it, Irene; for my eyes were very keen for anything that concerned you in those days."

"Well, it was very wicked of me, then, and I promise that I won't turn up my nose at the first bouquet you give me from Fen Court."

"You shall have a beauty the very first thing in the morning. I hope the garden will be in good order—I have given sufficient directions on the subject."

"Doesn't Isabella care for flowers?"

"Not much, I think. She is a strange creature in some of her ways. I sometimes wonder, darling, how you and she will get on with one another."

"Why, admirably, of course—I mean to get on with her."

Colonel Mordaunt turns round and gazes at his wife adoringly.

"You are too good!" he says; "Oh, Irene! if I don't make you happy, may God's judgment——"

"Hush! hush!" she interrupts him quickly, "pray don't say that, you make me feel so small."

But see how much less than a woman she would have been not too care for him, who had taken her to his arms, despite his knowledge of her outraged affections, and treated her as though she had flown to them of her own accord. She does not love him this gallant gentleman who almost worships her, but she is very grateful and almost happy, and bids fair to make a model wife and mistress. As the carriage reaches the entrance to Fen Court, and rolls up the broad drive through the shrubbery, she becomes quite excited in her admiration.

"Is this ours—really?" she exclaims, inquiringly.

"It is yours, my own darling, every inch of it!" replies her husband.

"Oh! Philip!" and in her delight and surprise she turns and kisses him, for the first time of her own accord.

Colonel Mordaunt flushes up to his eyes with gratification, and this trifling episode has the power to dispel much of the nervousness with which he has looked forward to introducing his wife to Fen Court.

"Here we are, at last!" he exclaims, as the carriage stops before the bold porch, and a couple of menservants appear upon the doorstep. "Jump down, my darling; Isabella is sure to be waiting for you, and you must be tired to death with this long drive."

"I am not at all tired," is her rejoinder; "and I mean to see every bit of the garden before I go to bed to-night."

Miss Mordaunt is waiting for them in the hall.

"Oh my dear Mrs. Mordaunt! I came — I thought, perhaps—I didn't know——"

"Did you not expect us so soon?" replies Irene, stooping to kiss her sister-in-law. "I think we have come rather quickly."

"Quickly!" echoes Colonel Mordaunt, who is close upon her heels; "why, we have been hours on the road. What time have you ordered dinner, Isabella?"

"At seven—at least I believe at seven—but if you would rather not——"

"The sooner the better," says her brother; "seven will do admirably. And now, if you will take Irene up to her bedroom and help her off with her things, I think she will be obliged to you. You won't dress to-night, darling?"

"Oh, no! Philip; only take the dust off. What a wide staircase, and such pretty carpets! Oh! is this my room? it is beautiful. How nice and fresh it looks. And blue, too! I wonder who chose blue? it is my favorite color."

"It was my brother who ordered it to be refurnished with this color. Can I help you off with your bonnet. Mrs. Mordaunt? or perhaps—if you had rather be alone—if I had better go——"

"Oh, no! don't go! I shall be ready directly. But why do you not call me by my Christian name? Surely we are not to be 'Miss' and 'Mrs.' to one another!"

"If you wish it—of course—but I shouldn't have thought——" Miss Mordaunt's deprecating manner is already casting a chill over Irene's coming home.

"Since we are to be sisters, I think it should be so," she answers, with a glance of scrutiny at her companion; but she is not so eager in her manner of addressing her again, and it is a relief to hear her husband's voice asking for admittance.

"Have you everything you want — are you quite comfortable? Isabella, where is Mrs. Quekett? I thought she would be here to welcome Irene to Fen Court."

Miss Mordaunt telegraphs a look of meaning to her brother — it is very slight, but Irene catches it, and feels immediately that there is something to be concealed.

"Who is Mrs. Quekett?" she demands abruptly, looking from one to the other.

"The housekeeper——" commences Miss Mordaunt.

"Well, hardly a housekeeper, Isabella, although she certainly does keep house for us," interrupts her brother.

"She does keep house for you, and yet she is not your housekeeper," says Irene, merrily; "she must be an anomaly, this Mrs. Quekett. Pray, is she young or old, fat or thin, wise or foolish? though, after what you have just said, Philip, I should not be at all surprised to hear she is all of them put together."

"You are a saucy girl, and don't deserve an answer; but when you come to know her, you will acknowledge that Mrs. Quekett is a very wonderful woman, and can be almost anything she chooses. When I said she was hardly a housekeeper, I meant she was superior to the place. But she lived for many years with my father in that capacity, and has always had a home with me since his death. You will find her a great help to you, darling, for I'm sure you cannot know much about housekeeping; and I hope you will get on very well together."

"There is no doubt of it; I always get on well with servants; that is, if they keep their places. But with regard to housekeeping, Philip, I intend to agreeably surprise you. I know much more than you imagine, and mean to make myself perfect. I always thought I should like to have a large house like this to look after, and to keep in spick-span order. I like pretty things, but the romance of untidyness never held any charms for me. I was cut out for an old maid."

"It is lucky for me, darling, that we met before you had made up your mind unalterably upon that subject," says Colonel Mordaunt, laughing, as he draws her arm within his own to lead her to the dining-room. "But, however good a manager you may be, I am sure you will find Mrs. Quekett an admirable assistant, to say the very least of it. She has been always used to manage the household affairs, and, were I you, I should leave them in her hands. Why should you trouble your head about such matters, when I can afford to keep some one to do it for you?"

"Mrs. Quekett will have plenty to do, Philip. I did not mean that I should rise with the lark each morning to call the maids, or walk about in the trail of the broom and dust-pan, to see that they do their duty; but I've no opinion of a mistress who leaves her work to the servants. Have you?"

At these words Isabella again steals one of those furtive, mutual-understanding glances at Colonel Mordaunt, with an expression that rouses not only Irene's curiosity, but her spirit, and she does not wait for an answer to her question:

"At all events, I mean to try and make my self equal to the position you have placed me in, Philip," she continues.

"And you would be so, my darling, a thousand times over," he whispers, fondly "even I had placed you on a throne."

This conversation gives a brief insight to the state of mind in which Irene enters on the performance of her new duties. The glances which she intercepted between her sister-in-law and her husband do not give her more than a moment's uneasiness, whilst they strengthen her purpose of self-dependence.

She misinterprets their meaning; she imagines they arose from their doubt of her capability to maintain her position as mistress of Fen Court; and she becomes determined, in consequence, to prove that they are mistaken. From the hour she accepted Colonel Mordaunt's proposal, and fixed her thoughts upon a future shared with him, Irene has experienced more pleasure from the prospect of having the entire management of this household at Fen Court upon her hands than anything else.

For, in order to fight successfully with disappointment, or even to fight, at all, we must have some definite employment. A man generally has a business or profession to engross his loyal thoughts and shut the door in the face of all the rebel ones (though what a knack they have of peeping through the chinks!); with him the grinding necessity of making bread, either for himself or others, is paramount, and leaves little leisure for painful introspection. It is not that he feels the less for being busy; it is that he has less time to feel. The female sex has in all ages, most undeservedly, gained credit for being the more constant of the two: but, though they mourn more explosively, their grief is neither so bitter nor so long. A man and woman who love each other are irrevocably separated: what happens to them? He seldom speaks of his loss to any one; if he does, it is in short, sharp sentences, that are dismissed as soon as possible: and he goes about his work as usual; worries his head over the ledger in his counting-house; strains every nerve to outwit the counsel for the other side; conducts three or four services a day, or sits up all night writing for the press. Every now and then, doubtless, a sad thought comes between him and his employment; he sees her, or hears of her, or the remembrance of something they have shared in the past smites him with sudden pain; but he puts it away: he must put it away, if he is to pursue the business which depends upon his brain, or hand, or skill. Where is the woman, meanwhile, who mourns him, poor wretch, as hopelessly, (I have no wish to detract from the sex's capability of loving) as only a woman can?

Sitting by the fire, most likely, if it is winter, or lying on her bed if it is summer. with a novel in her hand, or a piece of fancy work, and all her mind fixed upon her absent lover: ready and willing to talk over the cruelty of her disappointment with the first friend who calls: crying till she can hardly see out of her eyes: refusing to attend any party of pleasure (women think giving up balls and theatres and concerts an immense proof of constancy; they don't understand how the lightest laughter is often used to conceal the heaviest hearts); even refusing to eat: sitting down, in fact, with her dead love in her lap, determined to nurse it and weep over it, and recall all she has lost with it, until she makes herself first hysterical and then useless, and lastly ill, and a worry to every one connected with her. Our friends die, and we bury them. Why can't we bury the corpses of our dead hopes in the same way? The regret we feel for those whom we have lost by death is sad enough and sharp enough, God knows, as it returns in the silent watches of the night, or even amidst the clamorous hurry of the day; but what would it not be were we to keep those still forms ever beside us, to prevent all hope of sorrow sinking into natural sleep? Yet that is what most women do with their blighted affections; and many of them experience actual disappointment when they discover that Time has mercifully closed the wound, and they are 'getting over it.' They keep it open as long as they possibly can; they tear the bandage away which opportunity affords them; and when the healed spot is no longer capable of laceration, they will sit down and begin to cry afresh over their own inconstancy. And, perhaps, when they have reached this epoch, the man is still experiencing those occasional sharp, cruel stabs of remembrance which are all the worse to bear because they come so seldom, and the flesh is unused to them.

But if women were brought up to work like men (in other kind, perhaps, but with the same necessity), active employment, either of brain or hand, would place the sexes, in this matter, on a level; and whilst much needless misery would be spared to the one, a large amount of comfort would acrue to the other; for, of all persons with whom to shun intercourse in this life, give me the flabby thing which calls itself a woman who has had 'a disappointment'—as though there were no disappointment in the world but that which springs from love turned sour with adversity, like small beer by thunder.

Irene has never been a woman utterly without a purpose. In her early girlhood, and before she experienced any necessity to gamble with life for forgetfulness, she was accustomed to look upon each day in which she had done nothing as a day to be regretted. She used to read much at that time, not desultorily, but on a fixed plan; and she would allow no pleasure, however tempting, to lure her from her self-imposed task until it was accomplished. She took a very bright interest in politics; in the projects for improving the condition of the nation at large, and all new discoveries, whether in art, science, or nature; attempted, also, as most able minds do, to put down her thoughts on all these things in writing, but was quite satisfied with the ample variety of mental food which ancient and modern literature placed before her, and never had the least desire to cram her own ideas down the throats of others. In fine, until the unfortunate moment arrived in which she met Eric Keir, Irene was a happy, helpful, matter-of-fact woman; and though the two blows which she received so close together did for awhile crush life's purpose out of her and blur her vision of a noble and elevated future, it is all coming back to her now as she finds herself mistress of Fen Court, and the mists that obscured her duty are clearing away from before her eyes. To make her husband's house what it should be (and what Colonel Mordaunt has already deplored, in her hearing. that it is not), one of the best-appointed and pleasantest houses in the county; to render herself an agreeable, favourite hostess; to be the ruler of his household, the friend of his tenants, and the benefactor of the poor who are dependent on him—this is the path which she has chalked out for herself, and in which she is resolute to walk. Some women think it beneath them to make their husbands' home comfortable. They want to deliver lectures like Emily Faithful, or write books like Mrs. Riddell, or compose songs like Elizabeth Philp, or play *Juliet* like Mrs. Scott-Siddons; and if they are not permitted to labor through the medium of the stage, the platform, or the press, their mission is wrested from them: there is nothing more to live for.

Irene Mordaunt knows better. She knows that if genius is not required to keep the machinery of a large establishment in working order, good sense is; and, however capable and far-seeing and practical her head may be, it is none too much so for the worthy employment of the large sums of money that must annually pass through her hands. She does not think the work beneath her; she feels like a queen entering upon her territory; and as her husband, when their dinner is ended, makes the tour with her of his possessions, she notes with a keen eye where improvement is most needed and registers inward vows to be faithful to the trust committed to her. The knowledge of her responsibility works on Irene like a charm: her spirits rise; her eyes become brighter, her pulses beat more healthfully, and she retires to rest full of expectation for the coming morrow. Such are some of the good effects of realizing that there is work left in the world to do which no one can accomplish so well as ourselves. Had Irene remained at Laburnum Cottage with Mrs. Cavendish, she might have continued to be a love-sick maiden to this day; as it is, the task which she has undertaken with a sincere intention of fulfilling, will lift her, step by step, above the earth-stained troubles of the world, until she has reached the highest elevation her mortal nature is capable of attaining.

She wakes in the morning, fresh as a flower, and active as a squirrel. She has not opened her eyes two seconds before she has thrown up the casement and is inhaling the sweetness of the noisette roses that cluster round it. The pure, cool country air is like a draught of life; the scented flowers are hanging, six and eight upon one stem; across the meadow comes the lowing of the cows as they return from the milking shed, and the bleating of the calves that welcome them; and underneath her are the gardeners, sharpening their scythes to mow the dewy lawn. The freshness, the sweetness, the simplicity, the peace of all around her, wake the deepest gratitude in Irene's heart, and make the tears rise to her eyes. She is all anxiety to mingle again in the scenes that lie before her; to retrace her footsteps of last night, and make sure that it was all reality; and before Colonel Mordaunt has realised that she has left him, she is up and dressed, and roaming over the wet grass and through the shrubberies and gardens, whence, at sound of the breakfast-bell, she reappears, with rose-tinted cheeks, damp boots, a draggled muslin dress, and her hands full of flowers. Her husband, now looking one way and now the other, is on the door-step, anxiously awaiting her.

"My darling!" he commences, reproachfully.

"Now, Philip, don't scold! I know I'm a horrid object, but it won't take me a minute to change. I've been all through the hot-houses and the kitchen gardens, and down the wilderness, and over the bridge by that piece of water; and then I got into a field and found lots of mushrooms. (Do you like mushrooms? they're in my skirt, under the flowers.) And I came back by the meadows you showed me last night, where the horses are, and—oh! I am so tired and so wet; but I haven't enjoyed anything like it for months past."

Colonel Mordaunt looks as though he were enjoying the recital as much as she has done the reality.

"I am so glad to hear it," he says, as he kisses her; "but you can come in to breakfast as you are, can you not?"

"What! with my hair half-way down my back, and my dress clinging to me like a wet flag? I should scarcely look dignified at the head of your table, Philip. Give me ten minutes' grace, to set myself to rights. Good morning, Isabella. I have not a hand to offer you, but I have had such a delightful ramble."

Then she turns to the servant in attendance.

"Take these flowers, James, and place them on the sideboard; and bring up the breakfast. Have you been used to make the tea, Isabella? Will you be so good as to do so for one morning more, in consideration of the novelty of the situation? I will be in good time to-morrow, Philip; but I had no idea the place was half so lovely, and I ran on from one delight to another, and could not tear myself away."

She is mounting the staircase now, still attended by her husband; and Miss Mordaunt looks after her with unfeigned surprise. So young and strange—and yet so cool and at her ease! The woman who has spent all her life in fear, lest she should be saying or doing something wrong, cannot understand the confidence which is engendered by a knowledge of our own powers of pleasing. In another minute Irene is down again, her hair rearranged, and her dress exchanged for a wrapper of pale blue, which is wonderfully becoming to her; and as her sister-in-law sees her smile, and hears her talk, and watches her do all the honors of the breakfast-table as though she had sat there for years, she marvels how so bright an apparition can ever have been persuaded to link her fortunes with those of Philip, and take up her residence at Fen Court.

"What are you going to do to-day, Philip?" says Irene, as the meal draws to a conclusion.

Colonel Mordaunt has already risen from table, and taken up his station on the hearth-rug.

"Well, that depends mostly on yourself, my darling. I have a great deal to do, of course, after two months' absence, about the kennel and the farm; but I should hardly like to leave you alone so soon."

"But I shall have Isabella, and plenty of employment. There are all my things to be unpacked; and the new maid seems stupid; so I shall go and superintend her; and I have the dinner to order, and the kitchen to inspect, and to make the acquaintance of Mrs. What's-her-name."

Colonel Mordaunt starts.

"Mrs. Quekett! Ah! true; I should like to introduce Mrs. Quekett to you before I go out, Irene. She is such a very old servant of the family."

"All right, dear. Ring the bell, and tell her to come up now. I am quite ready to see her."

Again does Isabella raise deprecating eyes to her brother's face. Something, which the unsuspecting bride is sure to resent, must come to the surface before long, and, man-like, Colonel Mordaunt tries to throw the responsibility of the disclosure on to his sister's shoulders.

"Oh!—ah!—yes; to be sure! I suppose Mrs. Quekett will be able to see Irene now, Isabella?"

The mere question throws Miss Mordaunt into a state of extra flurry.

"I don't know, Philip—I know so little, you see. I am sure I cannot say. Perhaps you had better—but if Mrs. Mordaunt could wait—it is no use to ask me."

"Is the old woman ill?" demands Irene. It is the only solution of the apparent mystery she can imagine.

"Bless you! no! as well as you are," says her husband, forgetting the inexpediency of the confession; "only used to rise late. She has had no mistress, you know, my darling, and you must make some excuses for her in consequence; but—there, I hope to goodness you will get on well together, and have no quarrels or disagreements of any sort."

"Quarrels, Philip, with the servants!—you need have no fear of that. If Mrs. Quekett has not yet risen, I can easily give my orders for to-day to the cook: I suppose she is efficient and trustworthy?"

"Oh, yes; only, don't you think that it would be better, just at first, you know, to leave things as they are, and let Quekett manage the dinners for you?"

"No, Philip; I don't. I think, were I to do so, that I should be very likely never to gain any proper authority amongst my servants; and I should rather begin as I intend to go on. I see you have not much faith in my housekeeping," she continues, gaily; "but you have never had an opportunity of judging my powers. Wait till this evening. What time shall we dine?"

"When you choose, my darling; but seven has been the usual hour. I think, Isabella," turning to his sister, "that, as Irene says, it will be better for her to give her dinner orders this morning to the cook: what do you say?"

"Oh, don't ask me, Philip; it must be just as you please: only, what will Quekett think?"

"You can explain the matter to her, surely; and by to-morrow she will be acquainted with Irene. Perhaps she had better not see her till I return. I will come back to lunch."

"What a fuss about nothing!" says Irene, laughing. "My dear Philip, one would think I had never had the management of any servants before. I see how it is—the old housekeeper is jealous of my coming, and you are afraid she may let me see it. Well, then, have no fears; I will talk her out of her jealousy, and we shall be the best of friends by the time you return."

"Who could resist you?" replies the enamored Colonel, as he embraces his wife, and leaves the room.

"Now, the very first thing I want to see, Isabella," says Irene, rising from her chair, "is the drawing-room; for people will be coming to call on me by-and-by, you know, and I never fancy a sitting-room till I have arranged it according to my own taste. Will you come with me? You must let me be very *exigeante* for the first few days, and keep you all to myself."

For this expression of interest, to which she is so unaccustomed, Isabella Mordaunt feels very much inclined to cast her arms about the speaker's neck and thank her; but her natural nervousness rises uppermost, and she only looks foolish and uneasy.

"The drawing-room!—well, I hardly know—of course it is no business of mine—but I think it is locked."

"Locked!—don't you use it, then?"

"Not often—that is to say, only when we have a dinner-party."

"Oh, I mean to use it every day, and make it the prettiest room in the house. Let us go and inspect it at once. Who has the key?—Quekett?"

"I believe so—I am not sure," commences Miss Mordaunt. Irene answers by ringing the bell.

"James, desire Mrs. Quekett, or whoever has the key of the drawing-room, to send it down to me."

There is a delay of several minutes, and then the footman re-appears, with the key in his hand, and a comical expression in his face, half of pleasure and half of fear, as though a battle had been found necessary in order to archieve his purpose, but that he rather liked the warfare than otherwise. Irene thrusts her arm through that of her sister-in-law, and leads her off in triumph.

"Shocking! Horrible!" is her verdict, as the glories of the Fen Court drawing-room come to view. "My dear Isabella, how could you allow things to remain like this? No flowers — no white curtains—and all the furniture done up in brown holland, as though we had gone out of town. The first thing we must do is to strip off those horrid covers. Where is the housemaid?"

"But, my dear Mrs. Mordaunt"—Isabella cannot yet pluck up courage to address her sister-in-law by any other name—"she thinks—that is, Mrs. Quekett thinks—they are quite necessary for the preservation of the damask."

"And I think them quite unnecessary," retorts Irene, merrily. "Here, Anne; take off these covers; strip the muslin off the chandeliers, and open all the windows. The room feels as though a corpse had been laid out in it! What a fine piano!—that must come out into the middle of the room."

"It has always stood against the wall," says Isabella."

"Then I am sure it is quite time it had a change. Oh! what a lovely thing for flowers!" seizing on an old basin of embossed silver which stands on the floor; "what is this rubbish in it?—rose-leaves? Turn them out, Anne, and put the bowl on the sideboard in the dining-room. And, stop!—take all the vases away at the same time: I never keep a vase in sight unless it is filled with flowers."

"Yes, ma'am; but, please, what am I to do with these dead leaves?"

"Throw them away."

"Yes, ma'am; only," looking towards Miss Mordaunt, "Mrs. Quekett placed them, here, you know, miss!"

"Yes; to be sure; so she did. I hardly know, Mrs. Mordaunt, whether you ought——"

"To throw away Quekett's rose-leaves?" with a hearty laugh; "well, perhaps not; so you can return them to her, Anne, if you choose; only please to relieve my bowl of them as soon as possible."

Then she flits away, altering the disposition of the chairs and the tables; discarding the ornaments which she considers in bad taste; scattering music on the open piano, books and work upon the table, and flowers everywhere—doing all that a woman can, in fact, to turn a commonplace and dull-looking apartment into a temple of fanciful grace and beauty.

"Come, that is a little better!" she exclaims at last; "but it will bear any amount of improvement yet. Flowers are the thing, Isabella; you can make even an ugly room look nice with plenty of flowers; and there are really beautiful things here. It shall be a very picture of a room before the week is out. And now to my dinner—I had nearly forgotten it. That old woman must be up by this time."

"It is only just eleven," replies Miss Mordaunt.

"As much as that!" with a look of dismay: "my dear Isabella, I shall be all behind-hand, and when I have been boasting to Philip! I must see Quekett at once in the morning-room and then we will arrange our plans for the day."

She flies to the morning-room—a pleasant little apartment next the dining-room, which is to be dedicated to her use—and pulls the bell rather vigorously in her haste.

"James, desire Mrs. Quekett to come up to me at once."

"Yes, ma'am," replies James, and retires, inwardly chuckling. He reads the character of his new mistress, and views with unholy delight domestic differences looming in the distance.

"Won't there be a row!" he remarks, as the housemaid goes unwillingly to deliver the message at the door of Mrs. Quekett's room.

Now, as it happens, Mrs. Quekett is up and stirring; for curiosity to see the bride has overpowered her natural indolence; but she has not quite completed her toilette, and the unwelcome information that she is to "go downstairs at once and take her orders from the new missus in the morning-room" does not tend to promote her alacrity.

Another ten minutes have elapsed when Irene rings the bell again.

"Have you delivered my message to the housekeeper?"

"Yes, ma'am; and she's just coming down the stairs now."

"She must be a little quicker another time," his mistress murmurs. She feels, prophetically, that she is about to have trouble with this "old servant of the family," and she determines at once to assert her authority as head of her husband's household.

Mrs. Quekett enters; Irene looks up, meets her eye, and feels at once that they are enemies, There is something in the woman's glance and manner, even in this first interview, that savours so much of insolent familiarity, that her indignation is roused, and she can hardly speak to her without evincing it.

"I hope I see you well, ma'am," says Mrs. Quekett, sinking into the nearest chair.

"Quite well, thank you!" replies Irene, chocking down her wrath and trying to remember all her husband has told of the faithful services of the creature before her. "I have sent for you, Quekett, to take the orders for the dinner. We are rather late this morning"—glancing at her watch—"but, as it is the first time, it is perhaps excusable."

"Ah! I manage all that, ma'am; you will have no trouble about the dinners. I've pleased the Colonel and his father before him for over a matter of thirty years, and as I've begun so I shall go on. My cook gives me more trouble than she ought to do, but I shall get rid of her at Michaelmas, if not before, and try one from London instead. They're better taught than these country women. You're from London yourself, aren't you?"

Under this address Irene sits for a moment stupefied. She can hardly believe she is listening to a servant speaking. She has never been used to hear the domestics in her parents' house address her but in the most deferential tones; and as she realises that it really is the housekeeper who sits before her, her blood boils with indignation, and the look she raises should have withered Mrs. Quekett in her chair.

"I think we had better keep to the matter in hand," she answers, loftily. "I intend to give my own orders, Mrs. Quekett, and it will be your place to transmit them to the other servants. I shall very soon be able to judge what the cook can do, and to decide on the necessity of parting with her or not. Meanwhile, we will speak about the dinner."

She runs through the list of dishes rapidly, names the hour at which she desires the meal to be served, and enjoins the strictest punctuality on the astonished housekeeper.

"And to-morrow morning," says Irene, as she rises from her chair, "I must request you will be in this room by ten o'clock, to receive my orders—and if I am not here, you can wait for me. I shall go over the kitchens and lower offices this afternoon. Let the servants be prepared to receive me. And—one word, Mrs. Quekett: I have not been accustomed to see servants sit down in my presence."

With that she sails out of the room with the air of an offended queen.

Mrs. Quekett is not subdued, but she is enraged beyond measure. She turns purple and gasps in the chair where her new mistress has left her; and it takes a great deal of bottled porter and a great many stewed kidneys that morning to restore her to anything like her usual equanimity.

"Wait about here till it pleases her to come and give me her orders! Not for the highest lady in Christendom would I do it, and I'm sure I shan't for her. She may give her orders to the cook, and welcome. I don't stir out of my bed for any one until I'm inclined to do it. And not sit down in her presence, indeed! I must speak to the Colonel about this. Matters must be settled between the Colonel and me before this day closes."

And so, in truth, they must have been, to judge from the forlorn and henpecked appearance with which the Colonel enters his wife's dressing-room that evening before retiring to bed. He has passed a very happy day, for Irene has not confided the little domestic troubles of the morning to him; she has thought that she will fight the ignoble battle by herself, and that no servant will presume to make a few quietly-spoken words of caution a pretext for appealing to her master's judgment; but she is mistaken. Colonel Mordaunt has been enduring a very stormy half hour in that study of his before making his escape upstairs, and the vision of a peaceful married life has fled before it like a dream. He comes up to Irene's side, looking quite fagged and worn-out, and older by ten years than he did in the morning. She notices it at once.

"My dear Philip, how tired you must be! You have been exerting yourself too much after our long journey yesterday."

"I am only worried, my darling. What is this row between you and Quekett? I did so hope you would have been able to get on with the old woman."

"Has she been complaining to you."

"She came into my study just now—she has been used to have a talk with me occasionally in the evenings — and told me what had happened. She is very much put out about it, naturally."

"So was I put out about it—naturally! But I didn't immediately bring my troubles to you, Philip, though I conclude I have more right to your sympathy than a servant can have."

"How did it happen?"

"Nothing happened. If Mrs. Quickett is vexed—which she did not intimate to me—I suppose it is because I told her I intended to give the household orders in future. I dare say she has had a great deal of liberty; but that kind of thing can't go on when a man marries."

"Of course not—and I hope she will come round to see it in that light after a time. But she says she would rather you gave your orders to the cook instead of her. You won't mind that, will you?"

"Not at all—I shall prefer it; for, to tell you the truth, I don't quite like your Mrs. Quekett, Philip: her manners are too familiar and assuming to please me."

"Remember how long she has been with us; old servants are apt to forget themselves sometimes."

"Do you think so? My mother had a lady's-maid who had been with her since her marriage, and only left us for a home of her own; she never addressed me except by name, nor thought of sitting down in my presence, though she had known me from my birth."

Colonel Mordaunt grows fidgetty.

"Well, dear, I think the best way will be for you and Quekett to see as little of one another as possible. She has been accustomed to a great deal of consideration from us (rather more, perhaps, than the occasion warrants), and I dare say she does feel a little jealous, as you suggested, of your coming here, and monopolising all the attention. But it will wear off by-and-by. Don't you think so?"—wistfully.

"I don't understand servants being jealous of their mistresses, Philip. But if Mrs. Quekett and I are not to meet, what is the use of our keeping her? After all I shan't want a housekeeper. Let her go."

But at this piece of rank blasphemy her husband looks almost horrified.

"My dear child, do you know what you are talking about? Why, she has been with us for the last thirty years."

"No reason she should remain thirty more. I don't like her, Philip, and I never shall."

"Hush! Pray don't say that. I am sure you will grow to like her."

"I am sure I shan't."

"You have not had a proper opportunity yet of judging of her character."

"I have seen quite enough of it. If I were superstitious, Philip, I should think that woman possessed the evil eye — at all events for me."

"What nonsense, my darling! I thought you were too clever to talk like that, Why, if Quekett were to leave Fen Court I should think the whole house was going to topple down on our heads!"

"And so you wouldn't get rid of her, even for me?" whispers Irene, with the most insinuating of upward glances.

"What is there I wouldn't do for you?" her husband answers; and for a few moments delivers himself up to the charm of realising that he has secured the desire of his heart. But when he leaves her to herself again, the cloud returns to his brow, and his soul is disquieted within him. He feels that he is living on a volcano which is even now trembling beneath his feet, and may at any moment erupt in flames of malice and revenge which shall bring destruction in their train. His life is scarcely more enviable than that of Eric Keir. Each man walks the world with a heavy secret in his breast.

It is August. The harvest is nearly all gathered in, and every one is looking forward to September. Irene has issued her first invitations for the shooting season: one to her aunt, Mrs. Cavendish, and her daughter Mary, another to Mr. Pettingall—who is most anxious to see his young friend in her new position—and a third to some bachelor acquaintances of her husband's, whom Colonel Mordaunt assures her she will find delightful. In fact, the house is to be full; and Irene is quite excited at the prospect of entertaining so many guests. She flits about from room to room, followed by the meek Isabella, and issuing her orders without the slightest regard to the feelings of the great Mrs. Quekett. Not that Irene has forgotten Mrs. Quekett during the past month, or forgiven her. The mere fact of the housekeeper's refusal to receive her orders serves to keep her memory alive in her mistress's bosom and to make the intercourse between them purely nominal. Together they are frigidly polite to one another; and apart they are determinately hostile. Irene has ceased to make any comment on the housekeeper's behaviour or to express any desire for her dismissal; she has seen and heard enough during her residence at Fen Court to convince her that to pursue either course is futile, but she does what is far more galling to Mrs. Quickett's pride—she ignores her presence altogether. She makes no calls upon her duty; she neither blames nor praises her—she simply acts as though there were no such person in the house. So Rebecca Quekett continues to lie abed until noon, and to feed off the best of the land, and to twist her master round her little finger; but the servants no longer tremble at her presence; she has lost the absolute authority she held over them—she has been transformed from a captious tyrant into an injured but faithful servitor; and she takes good care to drum the fact into the Colonel's ears, and to hate the one who has brought about the change. Yet little does Irene reck her annoyance or her hate, she considers the presence of the housekeeper at Fen Court as an intolerable nuisance, and often wonders how her husband, who can be so firm in some things, should be so weak in this; but consoles herself with the idea that no lot in this world is entirely without its annoyance, and that she might have encountered a worse skeleton in the closet than Mrs. Quekett. Whether the Colonel would have agreed with her it is impossible to say. And so we bring them up to the latter days of August.

One morning Colonel Mordaunt receives a letter which seems greatly to disturb him.

"What is the matter, Philip?" demands Irene.

"Nothing that concerns you, my darling!—nothing, in fact, at all."

Yet he sits, with knitted brows, brooding over the contents of the epistle during the rest of breakfast, and reads it through three or four times before the meal is concluded. As Irene leaves the room, he calls his sister to his side.

"Isabella, I am greatly annoyed. Here is a letter from Oliver. He has heard of an opening for a practice somewhere in this neighborhood, and proposes coming down to speak to me about it."

"He can't expect to stay here," says Miss Mordaunt—"at least I hardly think so — there will not be room for him, you know. The house will be full next week."

"If he sleeps at the inn it will be all the same. I don't want Irene and him to meet."

"Have you never mentioned Oliver to her, then?" demands his sister, timidly.

"Cursorily I may, though I doubt if she will remember it. But it not that, Isabella. You know well enough that if I introduce young Ralston to Irene it will be difficult to explain why I don't ask him to the Court."

"And you think he might not come. It is nearly a year since he has been here."

"Good God! You have not the slightest perception. If Oliver comes here, he must see Quekett; and you know they never meet without a disturbance of some sort; and in her present state of feeling towards Irene I couldn't risk it. There is no knowing what she might not say."

"Then, what do you propose to do?"

"Put off Oliver till Quekett goes to town. If she were away, I should have no fear. Doesn't she intend to pay her usual visit to Lady What's-her-name this autumn?"

"I don't know — I am almost afraid she doesn't. I was speaking to her about it yesterday; but she has not been herself at all lately—she's quite—crotchety," says Miss Mordaunt; as though crotchetiness were an entirely new phase in Mrs. Quekett's character.

"Means to stay here on purpose, I suppose, because she knows we want the house to ourselves. Isabella, I often wish I had taken Irene abroad again. I question whether it would not be worth my while to take up a residence there, even now. She likes continental life, and I—well, any life almost would be preferable to this. I live in constant dread of an explosion."

"Wouldn't it"—commences Miss Mordaunt, timidly—"wouldn't it be better, Philip—of

course you know best—but still I can't help thinking——"

"What?—what?" he interrupts impatiently.

"That if you were to tell her——"

"Irene!"—the color fades out of Colonel Mordaunt's face at the bare idea—"to tell Irene? Why, Isabella, you must be mad to think of it!"

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They are engaged out to a dinner-party that evening; a very grand dinner-party given by Sir Samuel and Lady Grimstone, who live at Calverly Park, about twelve miles from Priestly and consider themselves of so much importance that they never even left their cards at Fen Court until they heard that the owner had brought home a wife to do the honors there. For, although Colonel Mordaunt, as master of the Priestly foxhounds, holds an important position in the county, and is on visiting terms with the best houses in the neighborhood, his poor meek sister has hitherto been completely overlooked.

"A single woman my dear!"—as Lady Grimstone remarked, when giving lessons on the inexpediency of forming useless acquaintances, to her newly-married daughter, Mrs. Eustace Lennox Jones—"a single woman, in order to gain a passport to society, should be either beautiful, accomplished, or clever. If she can look handsome, or sing well, or talk smartly, she amuses your other guests; if not, she only fills up the place of a better person. Nothing is to be had for nothing in this world; and we must work for social as well as our daily bread."

"But, why then, mamma," demanded on that occasion, Mrs. Eustace Lennox Jones, "do you invite Lady Arabella Vane? I am sure she is neither young, beautiful, nor witty; and yet you made up a party expressly for her last time she was in Priestly."

"Oh, my dear! you forget how wealthy she is, and how well connected. With three unmarried girls on my hands, I could never afford to give up the *entrée* of her house in town. Besides, she has brothers! No, my dear Everilda, learn where to draw the line. The great secret of success in forming an agreeable circle of acquaintances is to exclude the useless of either sex."

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And so poor Miss Mordaunt has been excluded hitherto as utterly useless, as in good truth she is; but my Lady Grimstone has been obliged to include her in the invitation to the bride and bridegroom. A young and pretty bride, fresh from the hands of the best society and a first-rate milliner, is no mean acquisition at a country dinner-table; better than if she were unmarried, especially where there are three daughters still to dispose of. And the useless single woman must needs come in her train. It is a great event to Isabella, though she is almost too shy to enjoy the prospect, and the kindness with which Irene has helped and advised her concerning her dress for the occasion has made her feel more inwardly indignant against Mrs. Quekett, and more afraid of that animal creature's tongue than she has ever been before. Colonel Mordaunt, too, who expects to meet several influential supporters of his favorite pursuit, has been looking forward to the evening with unusual pleasure and with great pride, at the thought of introducing his young wife to his old friend; he is all the more disappointed, therefore, when, after a long day spent in the harvest fields, he returns home to find Irene lying down with a face as white as chalk, and a pain in her head so acute that she cannot open her eyes to the light, no speak beyond a few words at a time.

"It is so stupid of me," she murmurs, in reply to his expressions of concern; "but I am sure it will go off by-and-by."

Isabella brings her strong tea, and she sits up and forces herself to swallow it, and feels as though her head would burst before the feat were accomplished.

"I think it must be the sun," she says, in explination to her husband. "I felt it very hot upon my head this afternoon, and the pain came on directly afterwards. Don't worry yourself about it, Philip; we need not start till six. I have a full hour in which to rest myself, and I am sure to be better before it is time to dress."

When that important moment arrives, she staggers to her feet, and attempts to go through the process of adornment; but her heart is stouter then her limbs; before it is half completed, she is seized with a deadly sickness and faintness, which prove beyond doubt that she is quite unfit for any further exertion that night; and reluctantly she is obliged to confess that she thinks she had better remain at home.

"How I wish I could stay with you!" says her husband, who is quite put out of conceit with the coming entertainment by the knowledge that she cannot accompany him; "but I suppose it would never do for us all to turn defaulters."

"Assuredly not," says Irene. "You will enjoy it when you get there, Philip, and I shall do very well here, lying on the sofa with Phœbe to look after me, and most likely be quite recovered by the time you return. That is the annoying part of these sudden attacks. You generally begin to revive at the very moment when it is too late to do so."

"Anyway, I couldn't take you as you are now," replies Colonel Mordaunt, "for you look perfectly ghastly. Well, I suppose it is time we should be off. Bother these stupid dinners! Isabella, are you ready? Phœbe, take good care of your mistress. *Au revoir*, my darling." And with that he steps into the carriage with his sister, and they drive away to Calverley. So my Lady Grimstone, much to her ladyship's disgust, only gets her, "useless single woman," after all.

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"I am much better," says Irene, two hours after, as she opens her eyes at the entrance of her maid. "What o'clock is it, Phœbe? have I been asleep?"

"It's close upon upon half-past seven, ma'am; and you've been asleep for more than two hours. I was that pleased when I heard you snore: I was sure it would do you good."

"How romantic!" laughs her mistress; "but I suppose one may be excused for snoring, when one's head is a mass of pain and buried under three sofa cushions. What a tumbled heap I have been lying in; and I feel as confused as though I had been asleep, like Rip Van Winkle, for a hundred years. What is that you have there, Phœbe? Coffee! Give it me without milk or sugar. It is the very thing I wanted. And throw that window wide open. Ah! what a heavenly coolness! It is like breathing new life."

"Let me fetch your brush, ma'am, and brush through your hair. You'll feel ever so much better after that! I know so well what these headaches as come from the sun are. Your head is just bursting for an hour or two, and you feels as sick as sick; and then of a suddent it all goes off and leaves you weak like; but well ——'

"That is just it, Phœbe," says Irene, smiling at the graphic description; "and all that I want to set me up again is a little fresh air. Make me tidy, and give me my hat, and I will try what a turn in the garden will do for me. No; don't attempt to put it up; my head is far too tender for that; and I shall see no one."

So, robed in a soft muslin dress, with her fair hair floating over her shoulders, and her garden-hat swinging in her hand, Irene goes down the staircase, rather staggeringly at first, but feeling less giddy with each step she takes, and out into the Fen Court garden. She turns towards the shrubbery, partly because it is sequestered, and partly because there are benches there on which she loves to sit and listen to the nightingales singing in the plantation beyond.

It is a very still evening; although the sun has so long gone down. Scarcely the voice of bird or insect is to be heard, and the rich August flowers hang their heads as though the heat had burned all their sweetness out of them, and they had no power left wherewith to scent the air. But to Irene, risen from a feverish couch, the stillness and the calm seem doubly grateful; and as she saunters along, silently and slowly, for she feels unequal to making much exertion, her footsteps leave no sound behind them.

She enters the shrubbery, which is thick and situated at some little distance from the house, and walks towards her favorite tree, an aged holly, which shelters a very comfortable modern bench of iron. What is her surprise, on reaching the spot, to find it is not at her disposal? The figure of a man, with the back of his head towards her, is stretched very comfortably the length of the seat, whilst he pours forth volumes of smoke from a meerschaum in front.

Irene's first thought is to beat a retreat: is not her back hair guiltless of ribbon, net, or comb? But the surprise occasioned by encountering a stranger where she least expected to do so has elicited a little "Oh!" from her, which has caught his ear. He looks round, leaps off the seat, and in another moment is standing before her, very red in the face, with his wide-awake in his hand, and his meerschaum smoking away all by itself on the shrubbery bench.

Both feel they ought to say something, and neither knows which should begin first. As usual, in most cases of difficulty, Woman wins the day.

"Pray don't let me disturb you," she commences, though without the least idea if he has any right there. "I am only taking a little walk through the shrubbery; you need not move!"

"It is I that should apologise for trespassing, although I am not aware to whom I have the pleasure of speaking," he answers, and then stops, waiting for a clue to her identity. He is a good, honest-looking young fellow, of three or four and twenty, with bright, blue eyes, and hair of the color usually called "sandy;" not very distinguished in appearance, perhaps, which idea is strengthened, at first sight, by the rough style of dress in which he is attired, and the "horsey" look about his breast-pin, tie, and watch-chain. And yet there is something in the face that is turned towards her (notwithstanding that an inflamed look about the eyes and cheekbones tells tales of a fast life); something of respectful admiration for herself, and delicacy lest he should have offended by his presence, that wins Irene's liking, even at this very early stage of her acquaintance with him.

"Perhaps you know Colonel Mordaunt, or were waiting here to see him," she goes on somewhat hurriedly; "but he is not at home this evening."

"I do know Colonel Mordaunt," replies the stranger, "and that he is from home. But, excuse me, is it possible I can be addressing Mrs. Mordaunt?"

"I am Mrs. Mordaunt," says Irene, simply.

"My uncle's wife!"

"Your uncle! Is my husband your uncle?" In her surprise she moves a few steps nearer him. "But what, then, is your name?"

"Oliver Ralston; at your service, madam," he answers, laughing.

"Ralston! oh, of course, I have heard Philip speak of you. I remember it distinctly now; but it was some time ago. I am very glad to see you. How do you do?"

And then they shake hands and say "How do you do?" to each other in the absurd and aimless manner we are wont to use on meeting, although we know quite well how each one "does" before our mouths are opened.

"But why did you not come to the house, Mr. Ralston?" continues Irene presently. "I do not think Colonel Mordaunt had any idea of your arrival. He has gone with his sister to dine at the Grimstones. I should have gone too, except for a racking headache."

"It is evident you have not heard much about me, Mrs. Mordaunt, or you would be aware that I have not the free run of Fen Court that you seem to imagine."

"Of your own uncle's house! What nonsense! I never could believe that. But, why, then, are you in the shrubbery?"

"I will tell you frankly, if you will permit me. I am an orphan, and have been under the guardianship of my uncle ever since I was a baby. I am a medical student also, and have held the post of house surgeon at one of the London hospitals for some time. London doesn't agree with me, morally or physically, and I have a great desire to get some practice in the country. I heard of something that might suit me near Priestley, yesterday, and wrote to my uncle concerning it. Afterwards I was told, if I wished for success, I must lose no time in looking after the business myself. So I ran down this morning and put up at the "Dog and Fox," and, as I heard the Fen Court people were all going out to Calverley Park to dinner (indeed, the carriage passed me as I was loitering about the lanes, some two hours since), I thought I might venture to intrude so far as to smoke my pipe on one of the shrubbery benches. This is a true and particular confession, Mrs. Mordaunt, and I hope, after hearing it, that you will acquit the prisoner of malice prepense in intruding on your solitude."

But she is not listening to him.

"At the 'Dog and Fox!'" she answers; "that horridly low little place in the middle of the village! And for Colonel Mordaunt's nephew! I never heard of such a thing. I am sure your uncle will be exceedingly vexed when you tell him. And Fen Court with a dozen bedrooms—why, it is enough to make all Priestley talk."

"Indeed, it was the best thing I could do—my uncle had not invited me here; and, as I told you before, I am not sufficiently a favorite to be able to run in and out just as I choose."

"Then I invite you, Mr. Ralston—I am mistress of Fen Court; and in the absence of my husband I beg you will consider yourself as my guest. We will go back to the house together."

"But, Mrs. Mordaunt, you are too good—but you do not knew—you do not understand—I am afraid my uncle will be vexed——"

"He will not be vexed with anything I choose to do, Mr. Ralston; but if he is vexed at this, I am quite sure I shall be vexed with him. Come, at all events, and have some supper, and wait up with me for his return. Come!"

She beckons him with an inclination of her head as she utters the word, and he is fain to follow her. They pass through the shrubberies and garden, and take a turn or two down the drive, and have grown quite friendly and familiar with one another (as young people brought together, with any excuse to be so, soon become) by the time they reach the house again.

"Of course I am your aunt!" Irene is saying, as the porch comes in view; "and you must call me so. I feel quite proud of having such a big nephew. I shall degenerate into an old twaddler by-and-by, like poor Miss Higgins, who is always talking of "my nevvy the captain"—my nevvy the doctor" will sound very well, won't it? particularly if you'll promise to be a real one, with M.D. after your name."

"If anything could induce me to shake myself free of the natural indolence that encumbers me," he is answering, and rather gravely, "it would be the belief that some one like yourself was good enough to take an interest in my career——" when, straight in the path before them, they encounter Mrs. Quekett, who, with a light shawl cast over her cap, has come out to enjoy the evening air.

Irene is passing on, without so much as a smile or an inclination of her head by way of recognition. She has received so much covert impertinence at Mrs. Quekett's hands, that she is not disposed to place herself in the way of more; and the very sight of the house-keeper is obnoxious to her. But Mrs. Quekett has no intention of permitting herself to be so slighted. At the first sight of Oliver Ralston she started, but by the time they meet upon the gravelled path she has laid her plans.

"Good evening, ma'am!" she commences, with forced courtesy to her so-called mistress, and then turns to her companion. "Well, Master Oliver! who would have thought of seeing you here? I am sure the Colonel has no expectations of your coming."

"I dare say not, Mrs. Quekett; he could hardly have, considering I had not time to write and inform him of my arrival."

"And how will he like it, Master Oliver, when he does hear it, eh? He's not over-pleased in general to be taken by surprise."

Here Irene, who cannot help saying what she feels, injudiciously puts in her oar.

"It can be no concern of yours, Quekett, what Colonel Mordaunt thinks or does not think, nor can your opinion, I imagine, be of much value to Mr. Ralston. He will sleep here to-night; see that the Green Room is prepared for him."

"When the Colonel gives orders for it I will, ma'am; but you will excuse me for saying that Mr. Oliver has never been put in the Green Room yet, and I don't expect that he will be."

"You will excuse me for saying, Mrs. Quekett," retorts Irene, now fairly roused, "that, as I am mistress of Fen Court, and you are the housekeeper, you will prepare any room for my guests that I may choose to select for their accommodation."

"I take my orders from the Colonel," replies woman, in a quietly insolent manner; "and as for the Green Room, it was always kept for gentlemen in my time, and I don't expect that the Colonel will choose to make any alterations now to what it was then." And so stumped past them.

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Irene is violently agitated—her face grows livid—her hands turn cold. She drags Oliver after her into the Fen Court dining-room, and there turns round on him with a vehemence that alarms him, lest they should be overheard.

"Mr. Ralston!—you know this place—you know your uncle—you have known them all for years. Tell me, for Heaven's sake, what is the reason that that woman is permitted to behave towards us as she does."

(To be continued.)

THE CABMAN'S STRATEGY.

A TRUE STORY.

It was on a cold, gloomy, rainy afternoon, in the month of November, 186—, that Mr. Septimus Glock, a retired German biscuit-baker, took a cab from the rank in the Bayswater road. He lived in the immediate neighborhood; and as he was about to be married on the following day, he had made up his mind to treat his bride to a wedding breakfast at the "Crown and Sceptre," at Greenwich. He was now going down to that renowned and somewhat expensive, though excellent hosterly, to give the order for it, and also to command the especial preparation of certain little toothsome, succulent dainties of Vater-land in which his soul delighted.

While looking out for the best horse and vehicle on the stand, he did not observe that one of the drivers gazed at him very markedly, strangely, and sharply, and then immediately pulled eagerly out of the rank to the footpath, with even more than a cabman's usual energy; but nevertheless such was the fact; and as this man's "turn-out"—a remarkably well appointed hansom—seemed to be in all respects suitable, he got into it without the slightest hesitation, snugly ensconced himself in one corner of the very comfortable seat, gave the order "Crown and Sceptre, Greenwhich," dropped the blind, to keep out the driving sleet, and then, as he found himself bowled smoothly along towards his destination at a good round pace, lay back at his ease, resolving to take a pleasant little nap during the journey.

When Mr. Glock awoke, he found, to his surprise, that it was getting dark. He looked very hastily out of the window, and became still more astonished to see that he was travelling, at the rate of at least ten miles an hour, among a lonely country road, without the vestige of a house in sight. "Good gracious!" said he to himself; "what does all this mean? I'm sure I gave the direction plainly enough; the man must be drunk!" So, throwing up the little trap door in the roof, he bawled out, "Hi! hi! cabman; you're going the wrong road! Stop — pull up your horse!"

To this appeal, a powerful, rich, mellow voice, replied, in commanding accents, "Pull up your tongue, be quiet, or you're a dead man!" And at the same moment, a hand, grasping a six-barrelled revolver, made its appearance through the opening, and took up its position within six inches of Mr. Glock's head.

We need scarcely say that this powerful persuasive was not without its effect. The terrified biscuit-baker became perfectly quiet, and the armed hand was, after a moment, withdrawn.

Meantime the horse was urged into a sharp gallop, the cab rattled on at an accelerated pace, and after turning down a narrow lane, drew up at a retired cottage which stood in a court-yard a little back from the road, and was completely hidden from view by an unusually thick and high blackthorn hedge.

The cabman, in a leisurely manner, descended from his seat, and with a stern, sharp, deceive "Come along," assisted his bewildered fare to alight; then, taking a key from his pocket, he unlocked the outer door of the cottage, and ushered the trembling Mr. Glock into a well furnished apartment on the first floor.

When this had been accomplished with some difficulty, and a few bruises on the poor biscuit-baker's shins, owing to the darkness of the passage and the winding of the awkward, old-fashioned narrow stairs, the mysterious Jehu produced a box of lucifers, and lighted a pair of candles which stood on the mantelpiece. Next he brought forth the six-chamberedr evolver, and placed it on the table. Then he handed his affrighted guest a chair, and politely requested him, with a strong spice of grim humor, to "be seated and make himself as comfortable as possible, while they had a little business conversation together."

"Thank ye," said the trembling Mr. Glock, as he sat himself down.

"And, now," proceeded the cabman, "oblige me with your hat—your watch and chain—those rings I see on your fingers—your purse—and any other little valuables which you may chance to have about you."

"I'm in a robber's den," muttered the victim as he delivered up the articles specified.

But he retained one ring—a plain gold one—which he wore on the little finger of his left hand. Observing this, the cabman pointed to it significantly; but when he saw that no notice was taken of this silent hint, he coolly proceeded to remove it from the bewildered biscuit-baker's finger.

"No, no—! I can't part with that," said Mr. Glock.

"Oh, yes, you can."

"But—but I won't!"

"Indeed you will!" responded the cabman, taking up his six-chambered revolver, with marked significance.

"But it belonged to my dear dead-and-gone first wife — it was our wedding ring — it is a valued keep-sake!" implored Mr. Glock.

"Precisely so; and I'll value it, and keep it, for your sake!"

"Was there ever such a stony-hearted monster?" groaned the old biscuit-baker, as he surrendered it with a sigh. "And now," continued he, "I presume that, as we have finished our little business, I can be allowed to depart?"

"Not a bit of it!" responded cabby.

"But it appears to me that you have completely exhausted your subject?"

"Not a bit of it!" was again the reply.

"He's going to make me write him a cheque!" murmured Mr. Glock.

"I'm going to tell you a litttle bit of my history!" said the cabman.

"I don't want to hear it!" grunted the captive, testily. "Tell me at once—how much?"

"How much what?"

"How much more money I'm to pay you for giving me my things back, and letting me go?"

"Wait and see! Now, listen! I'm about to astonish you!"

"You've astonished me quiet enough!"

"Psha!—listen! In the first place, as my London crib is in Bayswater, I generally make my head-quarters on the 'stand' at the 'Swan' close by!"

"As I know, to my cost!" muttered the biscuit-baker.

"Well!" continued the cabman. "A short time ago I fell over head and ears in love with a charming young girl whom I had driven into the City several times from a house in the neighborhood of Bayswater."

"But what the deuce has this to do with what I've got to pay?"

"You will soon know! One day I took heart and ventured to tell her that I adored her; and she then confessed that she liked me vastly, and would marry me, if she wasn't forced to wed another man!"

Glock felt strangely uncomfortable.

"Who do you suppose the man was whom she was to be forced to marry?" inquired the cabman.

"How can I possibly know?"

"It was you!"

"Me?"

"Yes, you old hippopotamus!"

"Now will you listen to reason! There's some mistake! You say that you're in love with a charming young girl?"

"Yes."

"But my intended bride, to whom I am to be married to-morrow, is a stout, middle-aged lady with a wart on her nose."

"What?" exclaimed the astounded Jehu.

"My intended is a widow—Mrs. Battersby, of High Street, Putney.

"The deuce!" shouted the astonished cabby, "I've got hold of the wrong bridegroom!—I've boned the wrong biscuit-baker! Are there two of you?"

"Two biscuit-bakers? Scores of 'em," responded Mr. Glock.

"And while I'm gabbling here, the other is getting married, perhaps! No time is to be lost. I'll be off to London directly."

"You'll take me with you, I hope?"

"I don't know that."

"But I must go down to Richmond to-night, where my friends, and my bride, Mrs. Battersby, and my son Sam, and my niece, Miss Lucy Mason, are all waiting for me."

"Lucy Mason! Lucy Mason your niece!"

"Yes, of course she is."

"By Jove, then I'm in luck at last!" shouted Jack, overjoyed, seizing the hand of his whilom prisoner, and shaking it with great cordiality.

"Eh—what on earth does this mean?" inquired the more than ever bewildered biscuit-baker.

"Mean?—honored, and respected, and revered Mr. Glock!" exclaimed the other, handing over the hat, rings, watch, and purse to him; "here are your things. I beg your pardon a thousand times over, and I'll drive you to Richmond, or to Jericho, or to Jerusalem, if you like! Your niece is that darling girl I want to marry—so give your consent, and let us be off at once."

"Humph!" said the now valorous Glock; "do you know, I'm rather glad of that——"

"That's a fine old uncle-in-law!" interposed Jack.

"Because you shan't have her!" continued Mr. Glock. "I intend her for my son, and she marries him next week."

"Not if I know it," said Jack, determinedly; "I'll do for him first!"

"But your pistol won't carry quite so far as Richmond!" saucily replied the triumphant biscuit-baker.

Chagrined at his ill-luck, the cabman again demanded Glock's adornments, which, having obtained, he once more asked for the hand of the niece to no purpose.

"Very well; then you are my prisoner again, on the same terms as before," said the cabman.

"Ah," retorted the biscuit-baker; "you can't frighten me now. You may lock me up—you may strip me—you may starve me——"

"Starve you!" interrupted the young Jehu; "Nonsense! Come, let's be friends, and make it up."

"Never," was the reply.

"Will you have a glass of champagne?" insinuatingly asked Jack.

"You annoy me, cabman!" responded Mr. Glock.

"And a biscuit?"

"Do you suppose I'll sell my niece for a glass of wine and a biscuit?" disdainfully demanded the other.

"Nay, come now," rejoined Jack; "be a little reasonable. Give me a fair hearing; listen quietly to what I have to say."

"Well, I will," replied the 'other; "but you don't bamboozle me out of my niece, though," murmured he to himself.

"Mr. Glock," said Jack, seriously, "my name is John Martingale; my father was one of the best-known and most respected horse-dealers at the West-end. I am a cab-driver, it is true, but I am also a cab proprietor. Half-a-dozen of the best and neatest hansoms in London belong to me; and I have saved a tidy bit of money. I'm in love with your niece, and she returns my affection. She has five hundred pounds, I know, coming to her when she is of age. Give your consent to our union, and I'll put a thousand pounds more to it, and the fifteen hundred shall all be settled on her for the benefit of any children we may have. I think that's fair."

The biscuit-maker, with a desire, if possible, to hoodwink the man of horses, said, "Well, it is certainly a fair offer; and if you have really won the girl's heart——"

"I swear it!" was the eager interruption.

"Well—I'll—I'll think it over, and we'll talk about it again to-morrow morning."

"And you'll stay here with me to-night?"

"Yes, I will;" thinking, to himself the while, "provided I can't get away."

"That's right. That's something like an uncle! I've got a famous double-bedded room; you shall have as good a plain supper and as fine a bed as you would get at 'Long's' or 'The Clarendon.' We'll get up a good blaze, and I'll pop the estables and drinkables on the table before you can count a hundred." Saying which, he set light to the fire, and hurried out of the room to fetch the supper-tray, leaving Mr. Glock ruminating on the possibility of flight.

"We are to sleep in a double-bedded room," thought he; "and this is, perhaps, my only opportunity for escape! It will never do to let this man Mary Lucy; my son wants the money to go into business! Humph! He is safe, I think, for five minutes, and his horse and cab still stand in the court-yard ready to start. If I once get mounted with the reins in my grip, I can afford to laugh at champagne supper, and double-bedded room!"

And, then, after tossing off a rummer of wine, which he poured from a decanter that stood on the chiffonier, and picking up his hat, purse, and other matters from the table, Mr. Glock hurried out of the chamber door, which he took the precaution of locking after him, and rushed rapidly down the stairs not two seconds before Jack, with a supper tray, re-entered the apartment.

"Here we are—here we are!" said he joyously; but then, not seeing his hoped-for uncle-in-law, he continued, "Hollo! where are we? Gone—evaporated—bolted! Yes! Oh, the old sinner!—he has rung the changes on me, to a certainty!" And, hurriedly opening the window at the back, he saw his late prisoner and guest with the reins in his hand, just about to climb on the cab. "Stop!" bawled he, in the voice of a stentor.

"Good night, cabby!—farewell, Fra Diavolo!" gaily responded Mr. Glock.

"What is to be done?" though Jack; and then he chanced to notice his gun, which hung against the wall close by the window—quickly took it down, unloaded though it was, and levelled it, exclaiming,

"Stir another step, and I'll lodge a bullet in your brains! Come back instantly!"

"Hold—hold—don't be a fool!" whimpered the affrighted biscuit-baker. "I'll come—I'm coming!"

"Not that way—not round by the door; I'm not going to lose sight of you again! Climb up this wall here, and through this window!"

"But I can't climb!"

"I'll make you."

"Oh, think of my rheumatics!"

"Your rheumatics did not hinder you from jumping up in my cab nimbly enough! Catch hold of the trellis-work fastened to the wall! Climb, or you're a gone man!"

"Take that horrible gun away! Don't point it at me!—it may go off of itself! I'll climb—I'll climb!" and straightway he began, in fear and trepidation, to scale the trellised wall. After a minute or two, while Jack was watching him narrowly, gun in hand, a sharp crackling noise was heard, as if from the giving way of part of the trellis-work, and Mr. Glock was heard shouting. "Ah, ah, ah!—Oh, oh, oh!" and then his bald head appeared above the window-sill, with a face undergoing all sorts of violent contortions.

"What ails you now?" said Jack, helping him into the room.

"The deuce take your wall!" he exclaimed: "I've got half a peck of lime and mortar in my eye!"

"Rub it out again," responded the imperturbable cabman.

"No; you blow in it, hard!"

"I'll be blowed if I do, unless you will give your consent to my marriage with your niece?"

"Never!" shrieked Mr. Glock, in an awful rage. "Give me that glass of water, and I'll wash it out."

"Here's to your better health!" said Jack, drinking the contents of the tumbler at a draught.

"Heartless man!" shouted the biscuit-baker; "do you think a few grains of mortar shall give you a victory over a German? Never, never, never!"

But the pain becoming intense, he again implored Jack to rescue him.

"Well, I will!"

"That's a good fellow; I thought you couldn't be so devoid of all feeling as to refuse!"

"The hand of Lucy Mason is the fee demanded for my services," responded Jack.

"I'm done!—I consent!" murmured the thoroughly beaten biscuit-baker.

The bargain was ratified, and carefully Jack removed the obnoxious particles. The mysterious cabman "tooled" the beaten biscuit-baker all the way to Richmond, in the dead of the night, without a single mishap by the way, landing him at their joint destination triumphantly at four o'clock in the morning.

Suffice it to say that Jack Martingale and Lucy Mason were married within a month and that neither of them have since had cause to regret their union.

WONDERINGS.

I wonder if ever the hawk,
Sailing the depths of blue
In graceful motion at rest,
Longs to be tender and true
Like the sparrow guarding her nest?
Does the tuneless bird ever long
For the lark's rare gift of song?
Does he ever grieve at his lot,
Or quarrel in vain with fate,
If others are what he is not?
Does he ever deem it a wrong
To swoop on the sparrow's mate?

I wonder if I shall find
The task for my hands and mind,
That for me is fittest and best—
In the doing of which is rest,
And weariness in not doing?
Ah! happy will be the day
When my toil shall seem like play,
And, whatever I am pursuing,
I shall see with as clear an eye,
And seize with as keen a zest,
As the hawk that droops from the sky
To pounce on the sparrow's nest.

He Wouldn't Get Married.

BY J. W. M.

He wouldn't get married; no, not he—he despised matrimony. It bound a fellow hand and foot; it tied him up for ever to troubles of one sort or another. It was a despicable thing, this matrimony; he'd keep clear of it, he warranted that.

And who was he? Some cynical or stoical old bachelor, so ugly in person, so whimsical in tastes, that he stood no chance of winning a lady fair, unless, indeed, he outlived the more gainly, the more loveable portion of his sex, and were "that last man" of whom there has been a deal of prating? Ah, no, not he; but a young, fine-looking fellow, with a face that would delight an artist — so charming in profile, with such dark, lustrous eyes, such a noble brow, and such a wealth of the deepest shade of auburn hair clustering about it in the grace of negligence. He was a splendid figure, too; and well did he know how to set it off to the best advantage. Nature, too, had kindly given him brains—not a mere moiety, but a generous lot—and well and carefully had he improved them. He was decidedly a man of talent; one, too, of exquisite tastes, and last but not least, his purse was a long and a weighty one. In short, he was one whom his fellows love to look upon, even though they feel an envious spite towards him; one upon whom elderly ladies smiled most graciously and whose footstep, laugh, words, the merest whisper even, had a magic influence over the hearts of gentle maidens, throwing them into such wild pulsations that they feared the lace bodice would burst its fettering ties.

This was the man, the man of five and twenty summers, who wouldn't get married—whom the wealth of the Indies and Australia combined would not tempt to give up his lone bachelorhood.

"An Arab life for me," he would say. "I can come and go then as I will; pitch and strike my tent as I think fit. No fretful wife, no squalling babies no littered parlors, no one to dictate breakfast, dinner or supper hour; no, no—but freedom, freedom. A blessed boon—I'll keep it too!"

Yet he was far from being an ungallant man. None could, none did, wait upon ladies with such delicate grace. And he was so kind-hearted, too, in his courtesies—singling out usually the neglected wall-flowers for his partners in the dance, and always offering to assist aged women with bundles out of the omnibus, and young nurses with babies into the same rattling vehicle; carrying school children — albeit they were common, every-day sort of children, with tangled red hair, snub noses and dirty faces, such children as never peep into poet's dreams—we say he would carry them across the streets when the drenching rain had flooded them; yes, and give them each a sixpence to buy sweets with. Oh, he was indeed a modern Bayard, and in truth would have been a perfect man—that is, as humanity goes—but that he wouldn't get married; nay, not so much as hear of such a thing.

"You would make a gloriously good husband," exclaimed his cousin Mary to him one day, as he entered her parlor bearing a whole budget of trifles she had commissioned her husband to bring, but which, as Edward knew he would forget, he had troubled himself to remember. "You have such a memory, Ned. Oh, dear, if Will had but a memory!"

Gentle reader, did you ever know a husband that had a good memory if his wife wanted him to go a-shopping on a rainy day, when her thin shoes wouldn't let her go out?

"If you hadn't been my cousin, Ned, I should have set my cap at you."

"Little good, though, would it have done, Cousin Moll—I am not a marrying man, you know."

"Shame on you to persist in such a resolution, Ned, when so many fair maidens are waiting for bridals, and when, too, you have what so few men do have—the elements of a good husband wrought in your very nature."

"Then you really think I would make a good husband, do you, little coz? Pray tell me if you judge phrenologically, or whether you have taken your degrees in physiognomy?"

"I judge by your daily deeds, Ned. Yes, and you would make such a father, too!" continued she, as Will junior came toddling into the parlor, catching his little gaitered feet in the mat and bumping his head against a footstool. "See you, you have stilled him in a moment, when Will would have been an hour about it."

And in truth, as though nothing had happened to his curly pate, the baby boy was striding Cousin Ned's shoulder, and taking an antelope gallop through the spacious rooms.

"Don't you wish you hadn't been my cousin, or hadn't studied physiology, coz, and had set your cap for me? One would think, to hear you talk, you were tired of Will, or that he was a most brutish husband and hateful father."

"Beware, sir!" and the little white hand was raised most threateningly; beware how you say a word against my husband—about that child's father! You'll find me a very amazon!"

"Beg pardon, Cousin Moll; but didn't you say——"

"Never mind what I said. A woman's words against her husband had better be forgotten quick by those who hear, if they would stand in her good graces long."

"Well, to return, then. Suppose you had set your cap and hadn't caught me, what then? Would you have died of a broken heart, coz?"

"But I would have caught you, Ned. Nay, never look so confident about it, as though it were impossible for a lady to storm your castled affections, and bear them off with the flush of victory on her cheek. Your heart is not so impregnable as you think, sir. You will never die a bachelor — a grandfather perhaps you may."

"Never," said Edward, with much earnestness. "Why, woman, are you mad? Would you despoil your firstborn of his princely heritage? Have I not made my will, and in that precious piece of parchment bequeathed upon my decease all that I own to this bonny wee coz of mine?—this Will, one curl of whose head is worth more than the tresses of a thousand maidens."

"Five years from this, and little Will may whistle for his share of your estates! A little dark-eyed, princely-looking youngster, answering to the name of Ned Somers, will claim it all, unless, indeed, some fairy-like sister should cry for a division of the spoils."

"You'll clear me out, now," exclaimed the youthful bachelor, tossing Will into his mother's lap; "a wife and a pair of little ones at the first glimpse into futurity! Don't take a second peep, Moll, for worlds—I beg you don't." And he hurried off into the streets, nearly upsetting in his way a little orange girl, and quite upsetting her basket; seeing which ere she had time to shed a tear, he sent her on her way rejoicing, wishing in her heart that just such a handsome man would run against her every day.

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"You look very happy, cousin Moll," said Edward, as he entered her parlor one day, and found her there reading a newly received letter; "I think you have some good news."

"I think I have, Ned—news that will interest you, too. A young, beautiful, and highly accomplished lady, an old schoolmate of mine, is coming here next week to pay me a long promised visit."

"And I must look out for my heart, must I?"

"Ah, no, that is the best of it, and that's what I want to tell you. She writes," reading from the letter. "You used to laugh at me, Mary, because I inveighed so terribly about matrimony, and say, in spite of my protestations, that I would be a bride ere I were out of my teens. But you were wrong. I have seen twenty-two summers, and daily do I rejoice that I am yet a maiden. Tell me not of wedded bliss, you can never tempt me from my resolution to remain 'fancy free.' Surrounded by my books, and using as feeling prompts my pencil or my pen, free to come and go as and when I care, I

know that I am happier far than if bound by nuptials vows to the wilful passion of a man, tied hand and foot by domestic duties, 'servant to a wooden cradle.'"

"There, that'll do, little coz," exclaimed Ned, with a mocking laugh, "don't, I pray you, read any further, or I shall fall in love with this friend of yours, on account of her good sense. When is she to make her appearance? I am impatient to see her—a woman that won't get married. Pray, did she ever have an offer?—a *bonâ fide* one, I mean?"

"Yes, indeed; to my certain knowledge she has sent six suitors off distracted. Take care she don't send you!"

"I am not a marrying man, you know."

"Shall I peep into futurity again?"

"Not if you love me, coz. But when comes this lady fair?"

"Next week, if nothing happens. But I warn you of your heart, Ned. Don't lose it, for she will keep her word, now, after refusing the men she has!"

"And who wants her to marry me? Not I—I'll help her keep her resolution."

"And she'll help you keep yours, I'll warrant; a partnership profitable to both. We'll see, Ned, how it prospers. I tremble, though, for Willie's fortune!"

"Beware, coz, or you'll have me knocking over little orange girls again," and he departed.

The maiden came at the appointed time, and greatly indeed was the young bachelor disappointed in her appearance. Instead of the lank, awkward, ugly-looking spinster he had expected to see—for he had somehow, in spite of his cousin's description, formed the idea that none but such a woman would protest so earnestly against a wedded life—instead of such, he beheld one of the most fairy-like creatures that ever flitted in a poet's mind when he dreamed "of fair women." Cheeks like the heart of a wild rose; lips like its bud in the morning; eyes so sparkling with soul-light that you cared not to see if they were black, or hazel, or blue; dark, silken hair waving over her forehead like a shadow on snow, and falling in long curls upon a neck of swan-like beauty; a most dainty little hand and graceful foot; a form of true but delicate proportions; a voice like a singing-bird's; a mind highly cultivated, versed in feminine accomplishments, roguish, arch, and sedate by turns. Such was Ella Stanley, the maiden who had foresworn matrimony.

"What think you of her?" asked Mrs. Lee of her cousin the first time they were alone.

"She is angelic," was the earnest answer.

"A pity she should live and die an old maid isn't it, Ned? and 'waste her sweetness on the desert air.'"

"If I were a marrying man, I'd do my best to break her resolution."

"But, as you are not, you'll help her keep it—will you?"

"Indeed, I will," said he; and when he sat that night in his lonely parlor, he repeated the words many times, and with increasing emphasis:

"'Twould break my heart to see one so lovely, so truly womanly, fettered in soul and body by a wedded tie. Nay, I'll help her keep her resolution."

And great pains he took to shield her from temptations of a wooing nature. No cavalier but himself, a bachelor sworn, did he allow to escort her out, or wait upon her in-doors. And that others might not think he was ungenerous, he never let her lack for any delicate attention that a marrying man might have been disposed to show. Her bouquet-holder was ever filled with the choicest flowers; the little alcove window, where she made her favorite seat, was ever strewn with rare engravings and costly books; her music-stand was laden with the latest songs; her card-basket filled to the brim with perfumed invitations to the galleries of art, the concert halls, festivities of any kind that happened in that brilliant circle. Had he been her chosen lover he could scarcely have done more.

"It will do for me to offer such attentions," he would say to Cousin Mary, "because, though young, I am not a marrying man."

"I should never allow myself to receive such attentions from your cousin, had not we both foresworn matrimony," would Ella say to the same lady.

Cousin Mary laughed in her sleeve, but like a prudent woman, never said a word.

Thus matters passed for some months, when one morning, as Edward called to take Ella out to ride, his cousin met him at the door, and with a face that expressed much anxiety told him the lady was quite ill.

"Ill! Why, Mary! Ella ill! Why didn't you let us know it? Have you sent for a physician?"

"We have done all we can for her. She was taken suddenly and violently last night; but the doctor says, if kept perfectly quiet, she will be out in a few days."

"I think I'll stay with you to-day, Mary, and help you keep Willie still, for he is a noisy little fellow, you know, and I can manage him better than any of you."

"I shall be glad to have you," and in spite of her anxiety—for Ella had been for a few hours very sick—an arch smile dimpled the lips of the young matron as she ushered Edward into the nursery.

Most patiently did he play with the little teasing fellow committed to his charge. Never a cry from the baby-boy disturbed the sick maiden's rest that day, nor on the four succeeding ones that intervened ere she was convalescent; and no lover could have seemed happier than Edward when Ella, appearing at the parlor door, attended by his cousin, he begged and obtained permission to lead the pale maiden to her alcove seat.

"The doctor says she must be kept very quiet," said Mrs. Lee, when having duly seen the rich cashmere folded about the delicate creature, and the curtains disposed so as to shield her from a breath of air, she turned to leave them. "I trust her in your care, my dear Edward. See that you keep her quiet."

"You will find me faithful to your charge," said the young man. "And now," turning to the maiden, "how shall I amuse this convalescent one? What can I do that will make the hours pass pleasantly, and yet not be wearisome?"

"Talk to me," was the brief reply.

Many an hour had Edward beguiled of loneliness, in the months just passed, by his rare conversational powers, and perchance that was the reason why Ella should now in that low, sweet voice say, "Talk to me." But it was strange, it was "passing strange," that then, just when he wanted to converse more eagerly than ever in his life before, he could not speak a word.

By-and-by the maiden looked up, as if amazed at the silence of her friend. His lustrous eyes were bent upon her—and oh, it was strange that other than a lover's eyes should beam with such tender glances! And strange it was, too, that one who had resolved to be ever "fancy free," should so blush and quiver!

"I must keep my gentle charge quiet, or Cousin Mary will complain," whispered Edward, as he marked the trembling creature, and strangely like a love-tone sounded his voice; and then he imprisoned the tiny white hand, and breathed a few words in the maiden's ear. Mesmeric words they doubtless were, and uttered only to soothe the fevered pulse. Effectual were they if that were the case, for the hand soon lay quiet within his own, and the thin white fingers were passive, even though Edward slipped upon one a costly ring, which he happened to have bought that very morn.

"If you were a marrying man, and you a marrying girl," whispered sweet Cousin Mary, as she and Willie, after a very long while, appeared at the beautiful nook, "I should think you were both deep in love, and this the blessed morn of your betrothal, so cosy and happy you look; but as Ned is a bachelor sworn, and Ella a spinster vowed, of course this is an idle surmise — so pray come to dinner, ye heartless ones."

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"The doctor has just gone away," said Mrs. Lee to her cousin, as she entered the parlor on the next morning; "and he says Ella must take a journey forthwith—that a change of air will recruit her quicker than anything else. But she is too feeble to travel alone, and neither Willie nor myself can go with her. What shall we do?"

"Send me," was the brief reply.

"I would: but fear one thing."

"Name it, sweet coz."

"That you would get married before you came back!"

"Nay, nay, sweet coz, I would get married before I went!"

And so he did, and five years after little Willie did whistle for his share of cousin Ned's estate — "a little dark-eyed, princely-looking youngster, with a fairy-like creature of a sister" Ella, laid legal claims to it all, and right joyfully were those claims acknowledged by the one who had said many a time, he would never, no, never, get married!

(For the Favorite.)

Some remarks upon the History of "Cock-Robin and Jenny Wren."

BY MAUDE LINDEN.

"Jenny Wren fell sick,
Upon a merry time,
In came Robin-Redbreast,
And brought her sops, and wine."

"Eat well of the sops, Jenny,
Drink well of the wine."
"Thank you Robin kindly,
You shall be mine."

Jenny, she got well,
And stood upon her feet,
And told Robin, plainly,
She "loved him not a bit."

Robin, being angry,
Hopped on a twig,
Saying "Out upon you, fie upon you,
Bold-faced Jig"

Now I ask, could Mr. Tennyson himself do better than this? Here is a passion and simplicity quite Homeric even, only wise people would shake their heads at you, compassionately, or otherwise, if you said so. But observe, what graphic power, what dramatic ease, what a natural tender story altogether, we have in this small compass. Where is our knowledge of the author of this delightful ballad and where the remnant of his works? Alas, I fear, that like the volatile Jenny whose character he has so greatly indicated, he has long lain under the green leaves, and his charming biographies, and piquant narrations are quite lost in improved versions of Old Stories for the young.

But these dear old rhymes were good for old and young. What truth, and wisdom, and nobleness, are exhibited in this pleasant nonsense about the familiar little birds endeared to every heart and imagination. What careless grace, and natural action in the story. No wonder that Robin "hopped on a twig." Miss Jenny Wren would not have been very unjustly served if Robin had established himself, on that particular twig, or on some other equally commodious branch in the neighborhood, with a well-behaved wife in a comfortable nest, and, so far as his old sweetheart was concerned, never came down again. But if we all got our deserts, retributive justive would be in force all the year round, and the blessed quality of mercy would find no scope for operation in such a howling wilderness.

It is true that Robin's language was not polite, but considering the provocation, we can scarcely call it exaggerated. "Bold-faced Jig" sounds harsh and uncomplimentary, and no doubt much surprised the dainty ears which had listened so complacently to the tender flatteries of a submissive and generous lover. But offences like that of the vain and selfish Jenny are apt to arouse wrathful sentiments in the masculine bosom, and when we hear of Robin ascending the twig, and reviling the object of his passion, we are aware that his conduct is not without a parallel in art or nature, and recollect that ill-used lovers generally, from an early period, have been noted for bad manners.

We all recollect with what a sudden change of opinion the hero of Locksley Hall regarded his "Cousin Anny," when she transferred her fickle and accommodating affections to the keeping of his despised rival, and the remarkable discourtesy and freedom with which he expressed his altered feelings, and it is quite probable that when Helen departed for Troy, Menelaus was not over scrupulous in his remarks, although his were tolerant times and he appears to have been a patient man.

Robin's anger was the best proof of his own integrity, and when openly told by the false darling of his bright eyes, that she "loved him not a bit" he would have been less true and tender than he was, if a sense of his betrayed trust, and undervalued regard had not stirred his scarlet breast with righteous indignation; while the wounded pride of a spirit conscious of its own worth, silenced, if it could not conquer, his grief at the heartless statement.

But, says the great Bard,

"Love is not love,
That alters, where it alteration finds."

And when "Jenny Wren"

"Fell sick again,
And Jenny Wren did die,
It caused poor Robin-Redbreast
To lament and sigh."

And the unselfish pity and fondness of love came pouring in upon the heart so cruelly emptied of delight, healing the sharp wounds of treachery and indifference with that cleansing flood. Then, forgetting all his wrongs, the bereaved lover recalls only the grace and charm that won him, and little Cock-Robin is as noble in his grief as the ideal "Arthur," the great King of the "Round Table," who, looking at his faithless, but repentant wife as she lies prostrate before him, would gladly see her dead, yet says:

"Let no man dare to say I love thee not."

Yes, Robin is a gentleman; who but the faithful slighted lover is chief mourner at the little sylvan grave, and who but he comes daily with unwearied care,

"To cover her with leaves."

Ah, the unwise Jennys, the foolish Virgins, who thanklessly take the truest homage as their due, do not always die tended by love and followed by regret. They live sometimes to reap the bitter harvest a hard cold vanity has sown. When their little day of triumph closes, and the lamp needs to be replenished with that which alone can brighten the darker season, there is no oil in their vessels.

Careless Robins are not unknown who accept the punishment, when they get any, of their misdemeanors with a defiant whistle, and go on courting and serenading, in brilliant waistcoats, without a remorseful thought of the gentle "Wrens" they have forsaken. But the time comes when the sleek dandy wanes into the dim and bedraggled bachelor, when the eyes sparkle, and the plumes shine no more; when, unloved and lonely, his cracked notes are carolled to disenchanted ears, and like the "Little Jackdaw of Rheims," he is under a ban and

"His feathers all seemed to be turned the wrong way."

But for dear Cock-Robin, the hero of our true fable, who has not love and honor in store? There is no fiction in his fidelity, no fanciful sentiment in his honest love, and the loyal little fellow holds, worthily, a place in every heart.

JUST AS OF OLD.

I saw my love in dreams last night
Pass up the sleeping moonlit lands,
The love-beams in her dear eyes bright,
A rosebud in her roseleaf hands.
And round me, as I nearer stept,
I felt her fond arms steal and fold,
While close against my heart she crept,
Just as of old.

The gray dawn broke, my love was gone.
The golden dream was past and dead;
I gat me to the churchyard lone
Wherein my love lay buried.
I found a headstone gray with years,
I bowed me to the morn-mists cold,
I wept, and knew she saw my tears,
Just as of old.

But ever while I live alone,
This comfort comes and soothes my care—
We two may meet, when all is done,
Far off in heaven's flower-garden fair.
And by the light above, beyond,
Chastened, each other's face behold,
Stainless, more pure, but true and fond,
Just as of old.

MATTIE HARDEN.

"Do not turn away so coldly, Mattie; you have a noble heart and I know you love me. If I were rich you would not refuse my request. I have your heart, none can gain that from me; but I had hoped that you would give me some word of love and encouragement before I leave my native land for five long years."

"You ask quite too much, Jerome; you are a dear friend, and I admit that I shall miss you, but my mother is a very proud, ambitious woman, and my father——"

"Yes, Mattie, I understand all that; our positions, as regards wealth are vastly different; all I have hoped or asked is, that if, after years of toil and waiting, I shall have amassed a fortune, retained an untarnished reputation, you will then grant me a reciprocation of the truest love man ever offered to woman. May I not hope, my darling?"

"Really, Jerome, I do not choose to bind myself; as I have said before, you ask too much." And the proud, beautiful heiress turned coldly from the pure-hearted, noble-minded young man who was her inferior only in that false estimation of equality which measures its subjects according to reputed wealth.

Thus, without receiving one word of love or kindness, Jerome left the palatial roof which sheltered the dearest object of his life. Mattie sought her own room, to shed bitter, burning tears over an idol which she had sacrificed at the altar of pride. Like Herodias's daughter, she had been "before instructed by her mother;" had been forbidden to unite her destiny with that of a poor man.

"Wealth is happiness," her proud mother often averred. "Never marry a man beneath your own station, my dear. Your exceeding beauty must raise you in the social scale. Cupid's arrows should be well tipped with gold as well as feathered with affection. Love is well enough in its place, but really it is only a secondary consideration. Make your choice first my darling and love will come in its course."

Still, with all this injudicious training, Mattie Harden was a noble girl. She had known and loved Jerome Moon from childhood; he had been her beau ideal of manliness ever since she could remember; some of the happiest hours she could recollect were spent in leaning on his arm while he taught her to guide her inexperienced feet, on skates, over fields of ice. Then, when summer came, they had their rambles through the park together, gathering flowers, feeding the fishes and young birds in their nests, or shooting pretty little arrows high in air from the trusty little ash-tree bows which Jerome fashioned with much skill.

Then, when childhood had blossomed into youth, they had their studies together, and long, hard, but loving strifes for the highest scholarship. Thus, from intuition, two congenial minds and souls had unconsciously learned to love; but time flies and brings its changes. Jerome was sent early to a distant academy to take a thorough course, while Mattie entered a seminary for ladies in their native town.

It was upon this separation that Mrs. Harden first noticed and feared the result of this attachment. She contrived to send her daughter away during the occurring vacations, till at last three years had passed, in which time the young friends had never met. Even the pleasant little letters which Jerome had at first sent to his "dear schoolmate" had been withheld, and during all this time her mother's counsel, and a consciousness of neglect from Jerome, served to weaken and lessen Mattie's regard for one who had been dear as a brother.

But an ardent lover does not easily relinquish his object; and when he returned to his home it was only to renew his acquaintance with Mattie, and as we have seen at the opening of our story to declare himself a constant lover, and to ask for a few words of hope and love ere he left his native land to seek his fortune across the wide sea.

"Faithful in life or death I shall ever be," resolved Jerome as he went with a sad heart from Mattie. "She loves me—I know it; she will never marry another. But why must I always suffer so? Why could she not have uttered some word of hope to cheer me in this struggle from poverty to wealth? May Heaven bless me in my honest, earnest efforts. Farewell, Mattie, Mattie!"

"Oh, what deceitful thing are lips!" gasped Mattie, when alone. "How we women school ourselves to hide our hearts and every noble, generous impulse of our natures! How cold and cruel my lover sees me, while within my heart is burning, breaking! What would I not give to redeem the past hour! Oh, wealth, how I hate it! and position—what a falsity! Nobler far art thou, Jerome, than I who am so false. May Heaven grant me some opportunity in life to make reparation for this sad hour."

If Mattie had not been fully conscious of her great love before she surely was now. But it was too late! too late!

* * * * * *

Five years! how long the time looks to the youth and maiden, yet how quickly it flies! and who can foretell the changes?

I had been married two years to a rising young lawyer when we removed to London.

Among the young ladies whom I met was Miss Harden, who had for a year been engaged as preceptress of the public school in our neighborhood. I had never seen the lady before, but I disliked her, for I had heard her history from my husband. He had told me of his cousin—Jerome Moon—of his love for the beautiful Miss Harden, and of the hauteur with which she had met his offer of love. I had known Jerome some years and loved him as a brother. I therefore understood his worthy, sensitive nature, and realized the pain he had for years suffered on her account, and still suffered daily. Then how could I but hate her who had so deeply wronged my husband's cousin? Why could not he despise her as I did? What was she that he should still be entranced by her?

I had determined to be a constant "thorn in her side," but when I saw that face so sad, and beheld the most striking beauty, and noted the superior intellect, then and not till then could I understand Jerome's devotion at her shrine. I instantly lost my hate while admiration for a time took its place. Instinctively I knew that she was suffering keenly and deeply. I was prepared to meet a serious young lady, for, not a year previous, she had lost both her parents and her wealth by a single stroke. Had she not been obliged to give up a life of ease and luxury for one of toil and dependence?

Nobly had she taken up her thorny cross, and faithfully labored, gaining much credit for her ability as an instructress. But I was surprised to meet a young lady who never smiled even in her most pleasing moods. A deep gloom overshadowed her young life. My interest soon deepened into friendship, and, as time passed, I was surprised to find how deeply we loved each other, and it was consequently arranged that she should take up her abode with us.

One day my dear husband, returning from his office, brought a letter.

"It is from Cousin Jerome," he explained placing it in my hands. "He is well, and succeeding even better than he anticipated."

I turned to Miss Harden, who sat reading at the window.

"It is a letter from India," I began, "from the worthiest young man I know. He is my husband's cousin—Jerome Moon. How I wish you might know him!"

"Is Jerome Moon your cousin?" she exclaimed with sudden wonder.

Then the thin lips grew white and bloodless, and we tenderly lifted the fainting form and laid it upon the nearest sofa, summoning the nearest medical assistance. An hour later she opened her beautiful brown eyes, but her strength did not return for many days. Intuitively I knew the secret of her sad life. She loved Jerome Moon even as he loved her.

* * * * * *

Two years later Jerome Moon had returned from India a wealthy man. His bright talents were acknowledged while he was poor, but now that fortune had lent her smiles his entrée upon life was thoroughly successful. Courted in the first and oldest circles, and by the most intriguing mammas, and fluttered about by all the butterflies of fashion, still his occasional visits to our pleasant home were his only hours of real enjoyment.

Miss Harden was still a teacher in the same school; but Jerome's devotion to her was unavailing.

"I can never be your wife, Jerome," she said upon the day of his return from India, when we had entreated her to give up her life of toil and share his affluence. "We might have been happy had it not been for my false pride. We have now changed spheres; you are wealthy and courted, while I am almost penniless. My pride is now a more formidable enemy than ever. I cannot insult your manhood by presuming upon your love. If you were only poor, it might be different; but now there is no hope. I shall never be your wife."

"My darling, do not say that. Eight years we have now been separated, during which time, Mattie, I surely have learned my own heart. I have found myself thinking constantly of you. You have been my inspiration all these long years, in every project of my life. I have hoped against fear, all these years, that you still loved me as you did when a little girl. Oh, those years of happy, innocent childhood! Shall I never know peace and joy again in reciprocated love? Must my life plan prove a failure? Oh, Mattie, do not doom the man who loves you thus faithfully to a life-long despair!"

"Hush, Jerome; you break down every support to self-control. Never speak in those tones to me again, I pray you. I have marked out my path through life and I must tread it alone. Should I marry you, Jerome, I should for ever hate myself, and ere long you, too, would learn to hate me. My very love forbids this union, for when I refused to love you because you were poor I became unworthy of your love. Seek in another what you have for ever lost in me."

"Mattie, your false pride—your decision in this matter—does poor justice to your superior intellect. Be my wife, and a lifetime of love and devotion to you alone shall prove to you that not the slightest degree of blame toward you shall attach itself to my memory of the past. I have suffered through your pride, but I shall never forget that you have suffered also."

"Jerome, these sentiments must cease. Do not let them rise to your lips again. Crush this unfortunate love from your heart. Let us be the friends we were in childhood if you will, but do not sue for more. Your happiness and mine depend upon this resolution."

* * * * * *

Long hours Mattie sat at the south bay-window, watching the progress of the grand mansion they were erecting near by. The beauty of its architecture and the grandeur of its proportions attracted every one, but to Mattie it had a deeper interest. It was Jerome's mansion, and designed for her; but as she watched its growth the same old look of determination would steal over the sad, pale face, and the lips become compressed by a more settled firmness. After its completion came the costly, elegant furniture, and then Mr. and Mrs. Hays took possession of their respective spheres as gardener and house-keeper, and Jerome removed his personal effects to his grand new home.

All the belles of his acquaintance smiled more sweetly than ever, and fathers as well as mothers of marriageable daughters grew more cordial and attentive. But all this was lost upon our hero. Though many bright stars shone he saw but one—one alone held his destiny, though it shed a faint, cold light. Yet still he hoped that he might gain power to climb into its more direct and warmer radiance. This was his only hope—his one desire.

* * * * *

It was a pleasant but warm afternoon when Mattie and I were returning from a long ride. Our errand had been a charitable one—obtaining subscriptions for the new orphan asylum. Our list was well filled with the names of the best people of our acquaintance, and summed up to higher figures than we had even anticipated.

"One more call," said I. "We will get Jerome's subscription, and then rest for to-day."

"No, I do not want to go there; you know I have never been, and to-day my head aches from our long, warm ride. Do let us go home. You can run down after tea."

"Nonsense, Mattie! We are here now, and you are going in with me. Do not succumb to a slight headache," said I, gayly, unwilling to recognize any other motive for her unwillingness.

Mechanically she followed me to the house. I rang the bell.

"Is Mr. Moon in?" I asked of Mrs. Hays who instantly appeared.

"Yes, ladies. He is in his room; be seated, and I will calm him."

"No, we will go to his room; we are in a hurry as we are on a business errand."

Then I took Mattie's arm and escorted her up the long, winding staircase, along the wide hall, and to the room which I knew was Jerome's private apartment. I tapped at the door, but no answer came. Then I opened it and stepped in, inviting Miss Harden to a seat with the complaisance of a hostess.

But she did not enter. Still she stood in the door-way, gazing with astonishment toward the farther end of the room. I followed the direction of her gaze, and beheld the most beautiful life-like portrait that I have ever seen. It was the life size portrait of a lady, with clear, transparent complexion, glorious brown eyes, tasteful braids of soft, dark hair, and a most perfect forehead, mouth and chin, the whole imbued with the rare coldness and hauteur of expression that I had never seen in the original, Mattie Harden herself. Then I heard a low cry of pain, and, turning quickly, beheld Mattie sinking, pale and lifeless, to the floor.

Before I could reach her stronger arms than mine supported her. Then Jerome, who had appeared from an adjoining room, carried her gently below stairs, and laid her upon the sofa in the parlor. When consciousness returned to the girl Jerome was still bending over her and administering restoratives. She waved him aside and attempted to rise, but her strength was insufficient and she sank back helplessly among the velvet cushions.

"Lie still, Mattie, till you are better," I advised.

Then her eyes wandered around the room and from one object to another; the room, furniture, carpets, mantel and ornaments, were so very similar to those in her own lost girlhood home that tears filled her eyes, and for the first time in her life she realized the vastness of Jerome's enduring love for her.

"How do you like my home?" questioned Jerome, when at last her eyes sought his.

"Oh, it is all like a beautiful dream," was her reply.

"Then why, Mattie, may I not, in the future, say our home? Stay with me always, will you not, my love?"

Then he bent lovingly and impressed a kiss upon the white forehead, while a velvety arm for the first time stole around his neck and she buried her face on his shoulder and sobbed aloud.

"Thank Heaven!" came from my heart as I extended a hand to each of them. "How I have longed to see this day! Mattie, I shall superintend everything to suit myself and you must not interfere. Remember your opinions are only a secondary matter."

Jerome gave a grateful smile, and Mattie did not speak even to remonstrance.

With as little delay as possible all the necessary arrangements were made, and truly can I say that of all the happy weddings I have ever attended this was the most supreme, the most truly spiritual.

Of course the disappointed, fashionable world was shocked, and talked wildly of Jerome's capture by a beautiful face, and how that the poor teacher had at last sacrificed her principle by marrying a man whom she had despised and rejected for years for the mere consideration of wealth and position. But we who know them both love and reverence them for their real worth, and think with loving indulgence even of Mattie's false pride, for surely her sufferings through this should prove sufficient atonement.

Therefore, oh, cruel world! grow charitable, for thou canst not read hearts. Appearances at best are a vain delusion.

POLLY'S HERO.

The sun had gone down, red and molten, like a ball of volcanic fire, behind the woods, whose leafless network of branches made a border again the sky as dainty and delicate as any thread lace.

The red brick tower of Holmsby Hall showed darkly athwart its background of lurid sky.

Polly Clifford, trudging home from her day's work at the village school, stood a minute at the rustic stone stile to admire the exquisite blending of sky and earth and grey autumnal woods.

"How beautiful it is," thought Polly, "and how like a description in a novel. Oh, dear, I should like to be rich and live in a great house like Holmsby Hall.

"And how I wish we lived in the age of romance, and then perhaps the master of the old Hall would step out from the woods and—we should somehow get acquainted.

"Of course he would be young and handsome, and he would fall in love with me at first sight, or it wouldn't be romance, and—but what nonsense! Real life is so different from books."

And Polly sighed softly as the dead leaves rustled under foot, and the aromatic breath of the autumn wind moaned its low monody in her ear.

"I wonder why Mr. Holmsby is travelling about," she thought to herself. "I wonder why he don't come back and live at the Hall. If I had such a lovely home as that, I know I wouldn't go off and leave it."

Polly made a pretty little picture as she stood there, the wind blowing her silky brown curls about, and her cheeks as fresh as newly-ripened peaches, while her dark blue eyes glittered like sapphires, and the brown calico dress she wore became her rarely.

Even as she stood there, musing with the active imagination that belongs to sunny eighteen, there was a rustle among the laurel hedges beyond, a quick, elastic step, and a young man sprang lightly over the stile, courteously doffing his cap to Polly.

Her heart gave a great flutter.

The crimson rushed to her cheek.

Was it—could it be Mr. Holmsby, of Holmsby Hall?

Was the tardy romance of her dreamy girl-life about to dawn on this windy October evening at last?

"Pardon me," he said, "but I think I must have lost my way. I went up to the Hall, but it was locked and fastened, and not even a servant was there; and now, when I fancied that I was about to regain the high road, I find myself in the midst of trackless wood. Would it be asking too much of you to direct me towards Holmsborough?"

"I can easily show you, sir," said Polly, blushing, yet contriving to speak with calm, gracious dignity. "But I hardly think they could have expected you at the Hall."

"Expected me?"

He looked at her with some surprise.

Polly's sweet, clear laughter rippled out like the sound of a mountain rivulet in the silence of the woods.

"Ah, you see that I have fathomed your secret, Mr. Holmsby," she said, archly. "You are worse off than Ulysses of old, for if I remember rightly, there was at least a watch-dog to greet him when he returned from his long absence."

The puzzled expression which had at first characterized his face passed away; he, too, smiled.

"And may I ask the name of the fair fortune-teller who has thus read the book of my past and present?" he asked.

"My name is Polly Clifford. I teach the village school just beyond the woods," she answered, frankly.

"And now, Mr. Holmsby, it is a good five miles to Holmsborough, and a cold evening. You are weary with travel—one can easily perceive that, without the gift of second sight—and I am sure my brother, who lives only half a mile away, will be very happy to entertain you as his guest to-night."

The stranger looked both relieved and gratified.

"I had not expected to receive such courtesy as this," said he. "But I must confess myself weary enough to accept the offer with many thanks.

"And, perhaps, when I am settled at Holmsby Hall," he added, with a curious, inexplicable glance at Polly's bright, eager face, "it may be in my power to return, in some measure, your kind hospitality."

Polly's heart beat with a pleasant sort of flutter.

How handsome his eyes were!

George Bird, the village beau, talked loud and laughed so, that he made the window frames rattle.

Harry Talkott sat with his chair tipped back, and thrust both his hands in his trousers' pockets as he walked.

Even the clergyman wore shappy clothes and talked with a twang.

But Mr. Holmsby—for Polly congratutated herself on thus promptly discovering the identity he would fain have concealed—was entirely different.

And long before they had reached home, Polly's simple heart was taken captive by the graceful self-possession and easy manner of her companion.

Jabez Clifford, a straightforward, frank-faced young farmer, was sitting by the evening fire of red blazing logs as Polly came in with her escort.

He stared.

So did his pretty, apple-cheeked, wife as she brought a hot cake to place on the tea-table alongside of cold beef.

"Jabez," Polly said, simply, "I have brought you a guest for to-night. Mr. Holmsby, of Holmsby Hall."

Jabez, naturally as hospitable as the sunshine, welcomed the new-comer at once.

"Sit down, sir, sit down," said he. "But I had supposed that Mr. Holmsby was still abroad."

"I returned last night," said the stranger.

But Polly ran away to take off her bonnet, brush out the glossy spirals of her sunny brown curls, and whisper in the ears of Elvira, her sister-in-law, the story of her strange and romantic rencontre.

"Wasn't it singular, Ellie?" she asked, as she hurriedly twisted a rose-coloured ribbon through the curls. "And—oh, Ellie, if I should be the lady of Holmsby Hall! Don't you think he's handsome? And isn't his voice low, and deep, and sweet, just like Edgar Ravenswood's? And——"

"He's well enough," said Elvira, as she lifted the steaming teapot off the hob of the kitchen grate; "but he isn't as good-looking as George Bird."

"George Bird!" cried Polly, contemptuously; "a mere pink-and-white dandy."

"For all that," persisted Elvira, "there's a disagreeable look in his eyes, and a sort of sneer on his lips. But come, Polly! tea's ready now."

Mr. Holmsby made himself exceedingly agreeable that evening; so much so, that even Elvira was converted to a more favorable opinion.

And little Polly sat with pink cheeks and glittering eyes, listening to his graceful eloquence.

"Isn't he splendid, Jabez?" she cried, when at last the guest was conducted into the best chamber, where there was a carpet on the floor, and the snowy linen sheets smelt of sweet clover and dried rose leaves.

"He's a smooth-tongued fellow enough," Jabez reflectively answered. "But I don't exactly like the way he talks about some things."

"That's because you haven't travelled," said Polly, disdainfully.

She rose early the next morning, and dressed herself in her prettiest blue alpaca, with ribbons to match the color of her eyes, and a late rose in her belt, while the breakfast waited for Jabez, who had been dispatched to the village for white sugar instead of the every day brown that was in the cupboard.

Presently Jabez returned, flushed and breathless.

"It beats all!" he exclaimed, setting down the cone-shaped grocery package on the table. "Do you know, Polly, Holmsby Hall was broken open yesterday afternoon, and all the silver and linen stolen? And——"

"And I can tell you who did it," said Mrs. Elvira, jumping, woman fashion, to an immediate conclusion; "that young man upstairs with the smooth tongue and the disagreeable droop to his eyelids. Don't stand staring there, Jabez, but run up this minute and see if he hasn't slipped off in the night, taking the whole side of the house with him."

Jabez made haste accordingly, while Polly and Elvira stood looking mutely at each other, as pale as the bleached damask table-cloth that was the pride of the latter's house-keeping, and in a minute he came down again.

"He's gone, and so has Elvira's grandmother's silver cream jug that was on the mantel, and the money out of the broken china match-safe that I put under a pile of linen sheets, and my best Sunday suit, and Elvira's black silk dress.

"No, no, wife, don't cry," he added, kindly; "as long as he's left you, and the baby, and Polly, we won't fret. Only, Polly," with a good-humored twinkle in his eyes, "you must be a little more careful about the company you invite home with you."

And Polly's tears were tears of genuine mortification at this unlooked-for ending of her enthusiastic dream of romance.

When Mr. Holmsby really did come back, the next spring, he turned out a fat, short, fussy old bachelor, with a thousand and one whims; and Polly never either saw nor heard anything more of her hero.

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THE FAVORITE

SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 1874.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS.

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ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

O. B. H.—From New York the fare is, we believe, $50 currency. Apply to P. M. S. Co., Pier 42, North River, New York.

THE MANCHESTER AQUARIUM.

The Manchester aquarium, which is just on the eve of completion, though widely different in character of structure from its now celebrated predecessors at Brighton and Sydenham, combines much that is excellent in both of these exhibitions. No more admirable site in an inland town could have been selected for its erection. Alexandra Park, of which it forms the chief and most important feature, fronting its beautiful lawn, is one of the most delightful retreats in the west-end portion of the busy city of Manchester and the borough of Salford. It is easy of approach, omnibuses running constantly at low fares from the centre of the city.

Our first impression, as it sprang fully into view, when we crossed the park to the chief entrance, was its ecclesiastical appearance; it might be mistaken for a gigantic temple, erected for some popular preacher. Its Italian-Gothic frontage, with rows of clearstory windows, and roofs at side, somewhat confirmed these impressions; but on entering its interior they were quickly dispelled. The building extends 174 ft. in length. It is built with white Ruabon brick, enriched with red Runcorn stone dressings, carved in various designs and figures. The roof is of Taylor's patent red and black tiles, formed into a pattern, which renders the building a conspicuous object throughout the surrounding district. But these tiles perform a more important office. They are non-conductors of heat. "I was in this building," the curator told us, "the hottest day we had last summer, when the thermometer stood in the shade more than 100 deg., and it was then full of workmen. All were broiling outside, but here it was as cool as a spring evening."

Passing through the lobby we enter the north corridor: it is nearly a repetition of that at the Crystal Palace,—a long row of glass-fronted tanks on the right-hand side, and a row of arches or bays on the left. These tanks are very capacious, eleven of them measuring 10 ft. 6 in. by 5 ft. 6 in. in depth, and from front to back, 6 ft.; the central tank of the row being 21 ft. long. Doubtless the experience gained both at Brighton and Sydenham was a valuable aid in the designing of these tanks, and also those of the south corridor, which is similar. They are a medium of their prototypes, avoiding the gigantic size of the first-named, and the general miniature size of the second. These twenty-two receptacles which Mr. Hooper, the curator, properly names the deap-sea tanks, are those in which it is proposed to keep the numerous tribes of the familiar and well-known forms of marine life that are captured in British waters. From each extremity of these corridors, which run the full length of the building, we enter its central and principal portion, a saloon or hall of large size being 150 ft. long., 40 ft. wide, and 54 ft. to the roof principals. Down each side of this hall, beneath the arches which divide it from the corridors, are placed the tidal tanks, of which more presently. Perhaps one of the most pleasing features is the arrangement and decoration of these arches. It is absolutely necessary that little or no light should pass through them to the transparent fronts of the corridor tanks, therefore it is intercepted by filling these spaces with growing evergreen ornamental plants, placing them on black marble sills, supported by carved bracket-heads, which form fountains for the tidal tanks below them. Again, above these arches are the clearstory windows reaching to the cornice of the open-panelled roof of polished pitch pine, supported by eleven principals of the same timber. Beyond this and its tanks there is no attempt at decoration whatever; all is plain and simple, and well adapted for the purpose for which it is intended. At each end of this hall we detect a copy of some portion of the Brighton aquarium, in two of the largest tanks, 40 ft. by 10 ft., with a depth of water of about 8 ft. It is easy to perceive the care with which these tanks have been designed. Possessing a transparent frontage similar to the largest of the Brighton tanks, and fully equal to them in extent, the serious error of a great breadth of from 30 ft. to 40 ft. from back to front, which renders the most pellucid waters semi-opaque, is avoided; these are only 10 ft., and the rays of light, in addition to entering at the surface of the water, and passing through it to the spectator, enter also through three apparently submarine caverns at the back. These are formed by encasing 4 ft. of the lower portion of the east and west and large windows with strong plate-glass, built in the rock-work. The east-end tank is the receptacle for the full body of water, about 5,000 gallons per hour, drawn from the reserve-cisterns, which extend to a depth of 6 ft. below the entire series of exhibition tanks. It enters this tank from an elevation of 14 ft., forming a thin sheet or cascade of water 13 ft. wide, falling on a ridge of rocks, dashing its spray in all directions, and then, by two overflows, to the right and left, passes to the corridor tanks, and, finally, enters the west tank, and returns to the range of cisterns below. Independently of this regular circulation of the water through every tank, other means are adopted for its perfect aëration. A portion, as it leaves the pumps, is diverted, and driven through rows of pipes placed above the corridor and tidal tanks, and passes through fine roses or jets, in the form of rain, to the surface of the water in each tank; this, independently of oxygenating the water, has a pleasing effect, the minute globules of water descending to a great depth again rise to the surface like effervescent bubbles of quicksilver, sparkling and giving it a lifelike appearance. Every visitor to the Crystal Palace aquarium will remember the shallow tanks in the side rooms stocked with our lovely sea anemones and other littoral forms of marine life. Very similar are the tidal tanks of the Manchester aquarium. They are constructed of polished black enamelled Welsh slate in two rows of sixteen compartments, 6 ft. long by 3 ft. in width, with a uniform depth of water of 12 in. The animals which these tanks will contain are seen not only through glass frontage, but in precisely the same way as the contents of the glass cases in our museums are. By simply opening a valve the water can be drawn from these tanks and returned to them either in a few minutes or hours, forming a perfect ebb and flow of the tides, and exposing the creatures they contain to the alternate action of exposure to the atmosphere and submersion of the tidal wave. We must not omit the arrangements for the preservation and exhibition of the denizens of our lakes, ponds, and rivers, and those animals that require to be kept in still water. * The large fresh-water tank occupies the central portion of the hall or saloon, and is 16 ft. by 6 ft., 2 ft. 6 in. deep, divided by plate-glass into six sections; at each of the centre angles of these divisions is a crystal fountain, causing a constant fresh supply and flow of the water, by which means it is hoped the most delicate of fresh-water fish may be kept for an indefinite period in full health and vigor. At a short distance from each end of this tank are twenty smaller ones, known as table aquaria, which will be appropriated for the purpose we have named. In addition to the public tanks in the aquarium proper, provision has been made for twelve large store-tanks at present in use in the company's temporary building, for the purpose of acclimatising marine animals after their reception from the different parts of the coasts.

Upwards of 200,000 gallons of pure sea-water will be required to maintain the whole series of tanks in full working condition, two-thirds of which will be constantly flowing from and into the reserve subterranean cisterns.

So successful has been the mode adopted by Mr. Lloyd at the Crystal Palace Aquarium of circulating the waters, and its general management, that there has been seen no reason to deviate from it in any of its important features.

* The total tank frontage is 750 lineal feet.

In this aquarium provision has been made for such accidents as breaking of glass, leakage of water, failure of a pump, and other contingencies; so that in no event, it is thought, will they for one moment interfere or disorganise the general arrangement.—*Builder.*

OUR ILLUSTRATIONS.

"EARLY LESSONS."

In the "good old times," to which this pleasantly-conceived and cleverly-executed picture, by Mr. Valentine W. Bromley, carries us back, youth were taught some things which have almost dropped out of the modern curriculum of education, physical or mental. Foremost among these was the art of fencing. When every gentleman carried a sword, it was necessary to know how to use it; when war-service was not confined to a distinct profession, and when the social manners were such that every one was liable to a challenge and dared not decline, it was also of literally vital importance to know how to handle a sword well. Be it remembered also that the rapier was the sword in general use—a weapon to be master of which demands long training of eye, and hand, and foot, and a development of the flexor and extensor muscles of the whole frame, so as to command the utmost agility combined with power. The elements of fencing seem simple enough, yet nothing but the severest training will render anyone a master of the subtleties of carte and tierce, feint, and thrust and parry; so, as we see in this picture of the old retainer playfully engaged with his little master, the lessons in this "noble art" had to be commenced early. The little fellow is heir, perhaps, of a great house, and the "early lessons" may be of service on many romantic occasions by-and-by; but we must leave the artist's suggestions to the reader's imagination. Suffice it to add that the picture is in the Exhibition of the Society of British Artists.

"CASUALS."

The humble applicants for humane relief, accepting a few bunches of grass and buttercups from the hands of those pretty little girls, in our Artist's pleasing sketch of a rural incident, seem to be in no state of extreme destitution, though captives who have been found going astray. Jenny is tolerably plump, and her foal has not lacked its natural nourishment; the ground where they stand yields a dainty morsel of palatable herbage, with dock-leaves and other weeds, much to the donkeys' taste. They are, nevertheless, grateful—as they ought to be—for the kindness offered by these young people, who meet them at the gate of the pound; but the troublesome little dog, which appears to be jealous of any attention shown by his indulgent mistresses to animals of another kind, interferes with the administration of this small charity by snapping and barking at the donkeys' noses. He would scarcely dare to practise such insolence within a yard of the dam's hind feet; and there is a sly glance in her shrewd eye that tells us she is just now wishing for a chance of one good punishing kick at the canine menial, which would only serve him right. The poet in a tender mood has written, as we know—

> Poor little foal of an oppressed race,
> I love the languid patience of thy face.

But the ass, when not habitually spoilt by illusage, is a beast of high spirit and intelligence, like the more dignified equine race. It would be worth while to bestow more liberal treatment upon him, and to cultivate his breed as we do that of the horse.

NEWS NOTES.

The Kingston and Pembroke Railway will be in running order to the Iron Mines by the 1st of September next.

Active operations at the Snowdon Iron Mines have commenced. Smelting is to be commenced as soon as the works can be built.

The Department of Marine and Fisheries has erected towers and fixed three white lights on the Island of Newfoundland:— one on Fort Point at the entrance of Trinity Harbor; another on the eastern end of Rose Blanche Point; and the third on the point of the beach at Belloram, Fortune Bay.

Exports of American Locomotives.—The Taunton Locomotive Manufacturing Company recently shipped four 26-ton locomotives for the Maronnas, Panda, and Monte Video Railway Company. These locomotives are highly finished; they have 5-ft. driving wheels, and cylinders 14 in. by 22 in., nickel-plated.

A Correspondent of the *Chicago Times* says that an enormous aerolite recently fell in the vicinity of Farmersville, Livingston county, Mo. The shock of its impact with the ground is stated to have been like an earthquake, and the molten mass is deseribed as fully twenty feet high above the soil, and some twenty-five feet in diameter. It presents the usual appearance of such bodies, being a black, shining mass of meteoric iron. Its size is unprecedented.

The *American Textile Manufacturer* says that the simplest and surest process for extracting oil spots is to saturate the spot with benzine, then place two pieces of very soft blotting paper under and two upon it, and press well; in some cases a hot iron is necessary; in others a high pressure, say 100 lbs. per inch, without heat is sufficient. By this means the fat is dissolved and entirely absorbed by the paper. To rub the oil spot with a sponge saturated with turpentine or benzine only spreads the grease.

The Canada Southern Railway Company have ordered seven hundred additional freight cars to be made forthwith, ten to be delivered per day until the contract is fulfilled. The Michigan Car works at the Grand Trunk Junction in Springwells will build two hundred and fifty of these freight cars, two hundred and fifty will be built at Dayton, Ohio, and one hundred and fifty at London, Ontario; and at Toledo one hundred flats will be converted into stock cars. The Michigan Car Company is also building a number of coal flats.

New Railway Scheme. — Strathroy, March, 4.—A meeting of citizens took place here to-day to meet a deputation from Arkona, to enter in the construction of a railroad from Port Frank, Lake Huron, southwards toward Lake Erie. The advance of such a line of road was fully insured by all present, and a committee to further the object was appointed. Surveys are to take place as soon as navigation opens, under instruction from the Dominion Government, to demonstrate the fitness of Port Frank as a harbor of refuge. It is thought that a large through trade in lumber from the Georgian Bay District, besides outgoing traffic, can be secured over the proposed line should a harbor be built at the northern terminus.

An American Railroad Centre. — St. Louis, in the apparent belief that it is to be the railroad centre of the United States, proposes to overcome the obstructions to railroad travelling arising from the hilly character of its situation by purchasing and grading a tract of land 300 ft. wide, and extending from the heart of the city far into the country. It is to be sunk deep enough to prevent interference with ordinary travel, and the city is to lay down twenty tracks leading to the Union Depot, and to give any railroad company the right to use them. The cost of the work is estimated at 4,000,000 dols. The Union Depôt is to be located in the main valley, about one mile from the river, and it is to be approached from the river by a tunnel, which is now being built.

Petroleum for Burning Brick.—A burner is in use in this country by which residuum or crude petroleum is used instead of coal or wood in brick kilns. By a simple contrivance the nozzle of the burner is made to throw the flame directly downward at the first firing, and after burning the head (at it is termed), this nozzle is replaced by a straight one, the change being effected in a few moments. The flame is thereby thrown into the arch any required distance, burning the whole kiln from one end, and doing it in much less time than by the old method, and with perfect success as regards the quality of the burning. One man, by this process, will be able to do as much firing as a dozen with the old, as he can attend to as many arches as may be set going in one yard, and by this means save a large item in labor. The tar or petroleum consumed will not cost as much as wood at $3.50 per cord.

The St. John *News* says: "The Municipal Council of Potton have under consideration a proposition to grant aid to the extent of $10,000 to the Missisquoi and Black River Railway. The proposed railway is 55 miles in length. If built, it will open up a country of great wealth and vast resources. Starting at Richmond, an important junction on the Grand Trunk, it will run through Melbourne, Brompton Gore, Ely, Stukely, Bolton, and Potton, and intersect with the South Eastern near Mansonville. It will pass by inexhaustible slate quarries in Melbourne; the valuable copper, soap stone, and chrome mines in Bolton; and will skirt the banks of a stream with immense water-power at present not utilized. It would also penetrate dense forests of valuable wood, which would open new sources of industry and bring fresh capital into the country. In the more settled portions of the route there are many fine farms; and the lands yet to be cleared would prove unexceptionable for grazing and dairy purposes. Among other grants to the road, Bolton has subscribed $20,000, North Stukely and Ely each a like sum, and South Stukely $10,000.

Intelligence of Birds.—Here is an interesting instance of the intelligence of storks: A great fire broke out in a little German town near where stood a tower about eighty feet high which formed a part of the town wall. On the summit a stork's nest had been built for so many years that the building had received the name of "Stork's Tower." At the time of the fire, there were three unfledged birds in the nest, and the poor little birdies were in great danger. But the old storks soon showed their good sense and their love for their young, for by turns they each flew off to some fish-pond just outside the walls; here they took a dip in the water, and filled their beaks with as much as they could carry away, then, notwithstanding the smoke and flames, they flew back to their little ones, poured the water from their beaks over them and the nest, and at the same time shaking it out from their feathers. Thus during the whole day did these faithful birds act as a winged fire brigade, till towards evening, when all danger for their young and their nest was over.

For the Favorite.

THE PONY.

BY MAUDE LINDEN.

What's missing from our treasures?
Why bear we this heart-load?
Comes not the Pony daily
Up the familiar road?
Watched we not for him alway,
With hopeful, happy eyes,
That darkened if he came not
Ere sunset left the skies?

And small need had the watchers
His absence to bewail,
And the glad words "Here's the Pony"
Were rarely known to fail.
Ere through the ancient willows
Came aught our gaze to meet,
Quick hearts told ears that listened
Of the Pony's rapid feet.

Grief, thought we, cannot touch us,
While the Pony comes and goes:
He is as sprightly as the west wind,
And white as whitest rose.
He cometh still,—why mourn we?
Why doth he drooping stand?
He comes no longer guided
By the old, kindly hand.

Strangers hold the rein now,
Each and every day;
Careless voices urge him
Along the well-known way,
His head forgets its gay toss,
His feet their merry trot,—
The Pony's life is weary
With those he loveth not.

Thou art missed, lost master,
As thou wouldst wish to be,—
Sadly keepeth Snow-drop
A memory of thee,
And, though o'er the waters,
Dost thou care to know,
That some, besides the Pony,
Remember long ago?

THE LUCKY ACCIDENT.

In the bay window of a dining-room in Middlemere Park, Middlemere, Kent, stood two brothers, one, in appearance, a man — the other, a boy, though really only a year or two younger; the elder, a barrister, fresh from slight work and great gaiety in town—of tremendous strength and sinewy build—with swarthy skin, dark brown hair, luxuriant whiskers and moustache, regular features, and well proportioned limbs — a dangerously handsome man; the younger, destined for the Church—still a beautiful boy, with slim figure, fair complexion, and finely chiselled face. On the one countenance sat courage and unscrupulousness to rivals, chivalry and devotion to what he loved; on the other, now gentleness and winning kindness, now obstinacy, but always conscientiousness.

These two brothers were sons of a well-to-do squire, Harold Thirlstane—not a rich man, but with the oldest blood in the county, the strain of Norman sieur and Saxon thane, in his veins.

He was an intimate friend of Conyers Legh, Earl of Middlemere (in whose house his sons were now standing), for two reasons—because they were the only gentlefolk of the village, and because Lord Arthur, the Earl's eldest son, had been a school-fellow, intimate friend, and devoted admirer of the elder brother, Douglas Thirlstane.

Besides this son, the Earl had but one child, Ellen, the pride of his heart, and the cynosure of the neighborhood. Possessed of a large dowry and high rank, itwas no wonder that such a girl should be sought after by every one, with her bright, softly rounded, pretty face, handsome figure, delicate limbs and fascinating disposition; now deeply loving, now shy, then reserved; rarely — very rarely proud, always bright and gentle, graceful, kind, and obliging.

Douglas Thirlstane had not seen her for years; when he saw her last, she had been changing from childhood to girlhood, and had lost her juvenescent prettiness without having yet got her girlish beauty. For her and her brother Douglas was waiting, and while they were delaying, he said to Cyril, tapping his foot lazily, "How is she looking?"

"I think, as I always have thought, that she is very pretty; but you are so *blasé* with your actresss and singers, that there is no saying but what you may not call her positively plain."

Just as he finished speaking, in they came; Ellen bright and graceful in her white summer dress and pretty ribbons; Arthur beaming with joy at seeing his old friend and idol, to whom he rushed with an eagerness quite foreign in its intensity.

But the gaze of Douglas wandered directly to Lady Ellen's face, and drank in its beauty with delight. So thoroughly pleased was he, that he forgot, how he was staring, and was quite startled when, blushing under its scrutiny, she said, shyly, "How do you do, Mr. Thirlstane?" Then, with the color showing even in his dark cheek, in shame at his rudeness, he apologized, and shook hands warmly.

She at once, seeing his embarrassment, asked him what where his wishes.

"Whatever you wish, Lady Ellen," replied he inwardly reflecting whether the time would ever come when he should be able to call this charming creature Nelly.

"Nonsense!" said she. "Would you rather shoot with Arthur, or fish with Cyril, or play croquet, or what?"

Now, Douglas and Lord Arthur had shot for the same school eleven at Wimbledon, and many other places; and though that was with a rifle, and this with a shot gun, the thought of shooting together once more was very pleasant, and reminded them of their happy old school-days.

Off they started together to "pot" some rabbits in the meadows round the oak-wood, where, after bagging a few, Lord Arthur said suddenly "Thirlstane, what do you think of Ellen now? Do you recollect how ungainly she was, when, eight years ago, you and I were both dazed about Annie Dashwood, who was half a dozen years older than either of us? Do you think Ellen would bear comparison with your belles of the drama?"

"Bear comparison? They are not fit to be mentioned in the same breath with her."

"Why, one would think that you were smitten. However, it's no use; Ellen's awfully afraid of you. You look so fierce, and behave so strangely, she says, and are not at all gentle, as she would have her ideal knight. Besides, she is, like most girls, smitten with that brother of yours."

"That's out of the question; he has been engaged these ten years, and just now is thinking of consummating his hopes."

"Well, never mind! Don't you think it rather odd? I do; and I feel that a claret cup and lunch would be a move of incalculable strategical importance."

Whereupon they wended their way back to the house, when they heard Lady Ellen and Cyril laughing. Strange to say, directly Douglas entered, she got shy and reserved, unconsciously heightening her charms by letting her long lashes droop.

Douglas, of course, had the seat of honor at lunch, and tried to get over reserve by banter, but with no result, except to make the Earl roar at the futility of his attempts.

After lunch Cyril inquired about the best pools for fish and Lord Arthur, having volunteered to accompany him with a landing net — to show him their favorite nooks—and the Earl wanting to attend to the estate, Douglas and Lady Ellen were left alone.

He was both delighted and dispirited; pleased to be with her alone, without the slightest notion what to do, for anecdotes from town she did not care to hear, saying that they were all scandal and nonsense; and despairing for news to tell her beyond his old school days, with his wild escapades. These he cared not to introduce for fear of prejudicing himself; so they walked disconsolately up and down the garden—he with never-ceasing stare of delight at her beauty; she shyer and more reserved than ever. At last a bright idea struck him. "Do you like poetry?"

"I have never read any poems," she replied, simply; "I have heard a few rhymes in my infancy, and met with a line here and there in novels; but we have not a single poetry book in the house, because papa and Arthur get me my books, and papa does not understand poetry. But I should like to hear some very much, if there is any without sentiment or love."

"Any!—why, there's heaps!" and he began to repeat Moore's "Paradise and the Peri."

When he had recited a few stanzas, he looked at her, and found her rapt in attention; then he went on until he came to the episode of the Peri and the dying hero's blood; and, as he repeated it in a melodious voice, he looked up again, and saw that Lady Ellen was affected.

"What have I done?" he said; "have I frightened you? Arthur said you were afraid of me; I am very sorry."

"No," said she, all her reserve and shyness gone; "I am not afraid of you; but the verse you read is so very sad and musical, I cannot help being overcome. Please continue; if that is poetry, I do like it."

He went on the end. When it was finished, she thanked him warmly, and inwardly thought how strikingly handsome he was, and how she wished not to be afraid of him when he was not reading poetry.

As soon as they got in, Arthur said, "Why, Nell, what have you been crying about? Has Thirlstane frightened you!"

"No," she replied, with a coy look, to see if the dreaded expression came back, and finding with delight that it did not: "he has been repeating poetry to me."

"Has he, by Jove?" said Arthur. "Then I'll be bound it was 'Paradise and the Peri.'"

"Yes, it was."

Arthur saw his mistake, and was vexed at having prejudiced his friend.

Soon after, the Thirlstane left, so as to be home in time for dinner; but every day Douglas would give up his much-loved shooting, and repeat poetry, to Lady Ellen. Now Tennyson's "May Queen," now Byron's "Napoleon," now Hood's "Song of the Shirt," and "Bridge of Sighs;" now again lines of his own, but the latter very rarely, for they generally breathed of love to her; and she got shy and reserved directly that came even in poetry.

In her presence, too, he was always gentle, so obliging, that after hearing so much about him, she was quite surprised, and wished she was not afraid of him.

In a word, Douglas Thirlstane was thoroughly in love, for the first time of his life; and worked hard at his profession by day, and his writing at night, merely reserving Saturday as a holiday, to enable him to indulge in his shooting — to render himself worthy of her hand and heart.

At Middlemere Park, Arthur was astonished at the gentleness and quietness of his friend, whom he assured his sister he had never known other than as wild and rough out of her presence, noted, as he said, for his pluck in forcing a football scrimmage, or keeping back an angry mob.

But Lady Ellen was still afraid of him; and Arthur's tales of his daring, were not calculated to remove her fear, though she admired his chivalrous courage; but she liked him when he read poetry, though she dreaded him at other times.

Such was the state of affairs a year afterwards, when the time came round for another vacation. Douglas has been invited to a tour in Italy, but, devoted as he was to travel, he yet refused, preferring to visit Middlemere Park.

* * * * * * * * * * *

At Middlemere Park in July in the garden again walked Douglas Thirlstane with Lady Ellen Legh: he was bright and excited, and evidently full of buoyancy when she looked at him. She felt afraid, and wondered if he would quote poetry again this July; but he disturbed her meditations.

"Lady Ellen, I love you, fondly, desperately; will you be my wife?"

"I cannot, Mr. Thirlsdale," timidly replied she, "Please don't ask me! please do leave me!"

He bowed, and left her; but just as he was turning she caught his glance, tender and sad as when he was reading about "the Peri;" only disappointment and despair were plainly there, dimming its brightness; and as he went off, she looked at his handsomely striking face, wondering at the man, whose plighted love she had just rejected without knowing why, half repentant.

He went in-doors: Arthur noticed his look, and knew directly what had happened, and rushed into the garden, crying, "Ellen!" She looked up.

He asked, "Why did you do this? You have refused one of the noblest fellows that ever lived. He loves you, as only a fierce, passionate nature like his can love. For you he has been slaving night and day. I know his nature: he will never ask again."

He left her: she burst into a flood of regretful tears. She felt that she admired, even loved the man whom she had just rejected; she knew well that her father would never have objected to her marrying a member of an old family, with such fine gifts, and the words of Lord Arthur rang in her ears—"He will never ask you again!" She did not come down to dinner that night, but wept herself to sleep in her own room.

Douglas was silent on the subject; but Arthur noticed how changed he was, and inwardly thought that his sister should have considered twice before refusing such a man.

The next day, the Thirlstanes came again, as was ever their wont; for their father was looking over his farm, and did not care to be bothered. Cyril soon went away on business for Lord Legh; and Arthur was going out to ride, a thing Douglas could not do, so once more he and Lady Ellen were left alone.

Trusting in his honor not to repeat any of the proposals of yesterday, she proposed to go for a drive, to try her new ponies.

"They're so very spirited, that I am afraid to try them alone, will you go with me, Mr. Thirlstane?"

Of course, he acquiesced, longing inwardly to be her natural protector.

All went well for two or three miles; Douglas was repeating poetry as of old, when suddenly the ponies took fright, and dashed off. She looked very frightened, but bravely clung to the reins, and would not give them over to him, when, to their surprise, they saw the imminent danger in which they were. The ponies had been making for home, and had reached within a couple of miles of it, rushing along the banks of a canal, ten or twelve feet deep.

Suddenly they pulled up short, and overturned the chaise, throwing Douglas on to the hard flinty road—severely lacerating his left arm and shoulder, and badly bruising his left side—and Ellen into the canal. Off started the ponies in their fright, dragging the overturned chaise home.

Douglas, hurt as he was, plunged into the water after Lady Ellen; with great difficulty succeeded in getting her on land, in a swoon; and he carried her home, longing to kiss the lovely face that honor and loyalty forbade him to touch.

Arrived at the Park, he rang the bell, laid his unconscious burden on the sofa, daintily and carefully, and his purpose accomplished, he sank on the floor exhausted by the effort.

The maid came in, and took her mistress to her own room, where she soon revived; but could not at first make out where she was. Soon, however, she recollected all about the accident. She asked for Mr. Thirlstane, and was told that, having been overcome by the excitement incident to her rescue, he was still unconscious in the silver bedroom; that the doctor was still with him, had examined him, and found his shoulder and arm much lacerated and cut to the bone.

"I will go and speak to the doctor," said Lady Ellen. She met him coming out of the room.

"Where did this happen, Lady Ellen?" asked the doctor.

"At the canal, about two miles off."

"Then he must, after saving you, have carried you that distance. I should not have thought any one could do it, injured as he is. I regret to say he is very badly hurt, and requires much care."

"Would it be unmaidenly and improper for me to see him, doctor?"

"It certainly would not. He has saved your life at the expense of his own, and consequently, has very strong claims on your gratitude."

"Saved my life!—and it was I who caused the accident by my carelessness! Then I will see him:" and in she glided, softly as a spirit.

On the dressing table she saw, among the contents of his pockets, a superb copy of "Lalla Rookh," bound in ivory and white morrocco, with the inscription, "For Lady Ellen," engraved on it. Evidently he had intended to give it to her yesterday, had her acceptance of his plight rendered it possible. She was visibly affected by this; but when she saw the handsome unconscious face, the scar on the head, under the clusters of brown hair, the bandaged left shoulder, and arm outside the coverlet, and the quiver of the wounded side, and now and again an expression of agony flitting across his face, she could not understand how she had rejected him, and "he saved my life!" she said, sorrowfully.

The sobs awoke him. As he looked around, he, too, could not make out where he was, or what had happened. All he saw was the beautiful, distressed Ellen, shedding tears; and he forgot that she had refused him yesterday. So, with soft and melting look, he said, "Who has pained you? What is amiss?"

Ellen was struck by his unselfish thoughts for her when in such agony, and said, "I am very sorry for having hurt you."

"Hurt me!" he ejaculated, in astonishment; "am I hurt? So I am. Would you mind ringing the bell, Lady Ellen, and asking the servant to take off my bandages, and soak them in cold water again—I am rather in pain?"

"Can't I do it?" said she.

"Of course you could," said he; "but it would not be proper of me to ask you."

"If you don't mind," she said, shyly, "I will try."

"But won't the blood frighten you?"

"No," said she; "I shed it, so I should not be afraid to see it. It would not be right to fear."

Then she took off the bandages far more tenderly with her tiny hands than any maid could have done; but when she saw the firm, white flesh and strong huge muscles, so mercilessly torn by the sharp flints of the canal bank, she burst out crying again, and said, "How shall I ever thank you for saving my life, Douglas?"

He marked the word and taking hope, said, "It was no service, Lady Ellen; it was but my duty to a lady;" and his eyes looked very sad at the thought of her being nothing more than a friend to him.

Presently she summoned courage to renew the conversation, and said, diffidently, "Douglas, I am very sorry for what I said to you yesterday; it was very rash and cruel of me."

"Do you take off your prohibition, then, Lady Ellen? May I ask you again?"

"Yes," she said, blushing, with her pretty long lashes drooping over her face.

"Do you really mean, then," said he, raising himself, though it evidently pained him, "that I may ask you to be my wife—my 'Nell'?"

"Yes," she said, her countenance suffused with scarlet; "it is very forward of me to speak to you as I have done; but Arthur said that you would never change, and never ask again. I love you very, very much, Douglas."

"Then, dearest, let me seal the contract," Douglas said.

With another blush, she bent her pretty face, and he impressed a kiss on it. As her soft golden hair fell against his forehead, he could hardly believe his good fortune, and put down the accident as the most fortunate event of his life.

* * * * *

Later on in the evening, came the Earl, and said, "Thirlstane, I don't know how I can ever requite you. My Nell is the most precious possession I have. She tells me that she asked you to marry her, and that you agreed. Is that true?"

"Yes, sir," replied happy Douglas; "or rather, I asked her. Have we your sanction?"

"Marry her, with all my heart," said the Earl. "If there's one thing I desired more than another, it was the union of our families: and I am proud of having such a son-in-law—brave enough to attempt what you did, and strong enough to do it. I wish you to live with me; I can't spare her altogether; I must have somebody to do the honors of the house. I will let you have her if you will remain here."

"I can never express my thanks to you for my darling Nelly, and for being enabled to live in the dear old county that I love so well, amongst all who are near and dear to me."

"The obligation is mutual, my boy. But here comes Arthur, so I will leave you."

In burst Arthur. "The maid has told me all about it! How can I ever recompense you for saving Nelly? She does not deserve it, after being so unkind to you, and causing the accident. If she had any gratitude, she——"

"Arthur you must not talk like that to me of my betrothed wife."

"Then, is Nelly going to marry you?"

"Certainly."

"Good! Then I will leave you to sleep, and dream of her. I will send and tell your governor all about it. Good night."

* * * * *

The next day was a bright July morning, and Douglas was awoke by the sun streaming through the blind. Presently, he heard a diffi-

dent little knock, and a soft voice asking, "May I come in?"

"Come in, Nell," was the answer.

And in she tripped, looking so charming and pretty in her morning dress, with cerise ribbons in her bright hair, carrying a little breakfast tray full of dainties for the invalid.

"How are you, dear, this morning?"

"Better, thank you, Nell; but why did you trouble to bring up my breakfast yourself?"

"Because I thought my foot was lighter than the maid's."

"It is small enough at any rate."

"How do you know, Mr. Impertinent?" she said, saucily, now looking at him shyly and laughing, low at the tiny scrap on the dainty embroidered shoe, with evident satisfaction.

"Because it has been the object of my admiration for the last two years."

"Oh, is that all you admire me for?" she said, pretending to be angry, and looking huffed, but lamentably failing, as shown in the tell-tale smile which played on her countenance.

"No, Nell; I love thy bright, pretty face, soft cheeks, and pretty ways."

"Oh, I shall be so vain if you flatter me so, Douglas!"

"No; but seriously speaking, Nell, I am so much obliged to you for bringing up my breakfast. Besides, I want my kiss."

Up she glided softly, with a piteous look at the bandaged arm, and kissed him on the forehead, smoothing back his bushy hair, receiving on her own soft cheek the reward.

* * * * * * * * * * *

Day after day she came and read to, or talked with him, until he got well. Then, just two months after the accident, one bright, balmy September morning, they were united in the old parish church of Middlemere. It was the opinion of the family and friends, who speeded their journey with good wishes, that the accident on both sides, was a lucky one.

IN THE SPRING.

Ah, sweet, now in the spring,
When all the wild birds sing,
  And all the air is sweet with scent of flowers,
A memory comes to me
Of what we used to be,
  And how we loved in vanished days and hours!

The old house rises tall,
And past the garden wall
  Two merry children go, hand linked in hand;
And hand in hand they pass
Across the meadow grass,
  No happier hearts in all the shining land.

They pluck the daisies sweet
That cluster round their feet,
  And bind the buttercups in bunches gay.
They laugh and sing and chat,
Of this thing and of that;
  No cloud is near to mar the merry day.

You must remember, too,
The stream where willows grew,
  And where the bank sloped to the water's edge;
And how we crept between
The ferns so tall and green,
  To find the moorhen's nest among the sedge.

And then, when tired of play,
While in the bright noonday
  We nestled down beneath the old oak tree.
How many a tale I told
Of knights and dame of old,
  And all the gallant deeds of chivalry!

"My ladye" wert thou then,
And I thy king of men—
  Thy knight amongst the jousts with helm and spear:
We loved e'en then; and now,
Bound by a closer vow,
  I found thee grown through all the years more dear.

But still a vague regret,
A wonder lingers yet
  That Life has grown so sober now and gray.
Alas, that golden time!
Alas, that morning prime!
  Alas that Spring should ever pass away!

For the Favorite.

RAY.

BY MARGARET DALLAS.

The last plate was wiped, and put with the others in the long row on the spotless pantry shelf. Ray gave a little breath of relief, as she plunged her hands and hot flushed face in the basin of cool water she had just brought from the pump. Then she drew down her sleeves, and went out on the porch. There was a glorious view of the sunset from here, but Ray was in no mood for golden and pink-tinted clouds just now, so she deliberately turned her back on the gorgeous pageant, and sat facing the dull, grey east. The others were playing croquet down in the orchard, under the spreading boughs of the great sweet apple tree. Brother Frank and Dolla Ashley against Guy Thornton and Sue. Ray could see them plainly, from where she sat, could catch the ripple of merry laughter, and now and then some stray fragment of conversation. But she did not move to go down and join them. Why should she? she thought a little bitterly. They were happy enough among themselves. She would only be in the way, and feel as she always felt when with them, painfully embarrassed, and decidedly *de trop*. So she sat and watched them, her hands fallen listlessly in her lap, a wistful look in her great grey eyes.

Sue was looking very lovely to-night, in her fleecy muslins, with a cluster of forget-me-nots just matching her eyes, nestled in the wavy hair, and when she tossed back her curls, to look up at Guy, in her pretty, dependent way, while he was directing her aim, the sunlight coaxing its way through the apple tree boughs glinted the brown tresses with burnished gold.

Ray felt a queer twinge at her heart. What right had Sue and Frank to monopolize all the family grace and beauty, and leave her only such a meagre share of plainness. It was not right. It was cruel, unjust, she thought hotly. She was not an angel you see, this little Ray Winthrop, only a weary dispirited girl, with a great longing in her heart for some kind, loving word, for only one of the many favors she saw lavished daily upon her brother and sister.

And yet how could one love her, so plain and awkward, so utterly unattractive in every way. "Cruel, unjust," she repeated again. She had never felt so about it before, had never cared much in fact, when people remarked upon the strange contrast, between herself and the other two. She had taken it as a matter of course. But lately, since this restless, painful yearning had come into her life, it had seemed to change her whole being. She had grown painfully shy, embarrassed even, beyond her wont. "A perfect little bear," Frank called her, and all the while her lonely heart was crying out so loudly for sympathy and love.

With this feeling, she had crept to her mother's side after tea, when the others had gone out, and, nestling down on the floor, laid her head in her knee. It was an act she could not remember of having done before, since she was a tiny child.

No wonder Mrs. Winthrop looked up from her novel with a well-bred stare to ask, "Are you sick Ray?" "No, mother, only a little tired, that is all." "Well then, if that is all do get up from the floor. A chair is the proper place for a young lady of eighteen to sit on. Strange you can never learn to be refined and graceful like Sue. One would think Sue were ten years your senior instead of three. But then, Sue and Frank are like my family. No Wentworth blood flows in your veins. You are like your father, all Winthrop. Poor man, you were always his favorite. The table is standing on the floor, Ray." And then she retreated behind her novel, while Ray went off with misty eyes and glowing cheeks.

She thought it all over, sitting here. "Like my father! Well I am glad of that, better so than a haughty Wentworth with more money than brains. And father loved me. If he had lived I might have been something better than a mere household drudge, as it is. Oh, father, father!" she broke off with a little choking sob. The gold and purple of the sunset clouds faded out of the sky, and twilight came trailing in her dusky robes. The quartette down in the orchard left their balls and mallets, and came slowly to the house, Dora and Frank going into the parlor, while Guy and Sue lingered on the porch steps.

Ray, unnoticed by either, had drawn further back behind the sheltering screen of honeysuckles, waiting for them to pass in. But this they seemed in no hurry to do as yet. Grace stood toying carelessly with a field daisy, bruising the white petals between her delicate fingers, looking afar off into the dim gloaming, as though no such person as Guy Thornton stood beside her gazing down on her perfect face with a tender passionate light in his dark eyes. Ray, peeping out from her shady screen, saw the look and her heart stopped its beating, the blood in her veins seemed turning to ice. She had no power to move or she would have stolen quietly away. As it was she could only sit motionless, with a grey set face waiting—waiting for the end.

"You are destroying that poor flower, Sue," Guy said at last, breaking in on the silence, that was growing rather constrained. "Give it to me please, I'll care for it more tenderly." He reached out his hand, but she held hers away with a provoking little laugh.

"Why are you so anxious to preserve it, you tender-hearted creature?" she asked flashing a saucy mischievous glance up into the dangerously handsome eyes. What she read there, caused her to drop her own, while a crimson flush spread over her face.

"Can you ask?" he said softly, bending his proud head until the blonde moustache almost brushed her cheek. "Need I tell you, that, because your hand has touched it, it is precious to me? That everything hallowed by your presence, is thereafter sanctified to me for your own dear sake? Need I tell you that I love you better than anything else in this world, more than life itself? What shall the answer be, little Sue? Only put your hand in mine if it is not nay and I am content."

For a moment she stood wavering with downcast eyes and sweetly trembling lips, then the little hands fluttered into his like birds to their rightful nest, and the strong white fingers closed over them in a tender clasp.

Half an hour later Ray, in the silence of her little room, kneeling by her snowy bed, was murmuring over and over with cold white lips, "God help me, I love Guy Thornton."

"Ray," said her mother one afternoon, "we must have some strawberries for tea. Mr. Thornton has gone to the city and he will need something refreshing after his long dusty ride. You had better go down in Wilson's meadow, they are so nice and large there."

Ray went wearily into the pantry, took a pail from the shelf, tied on her broad-brimmed hat and started off. Turning at the gate, she knew not why, to catch a last glimpse of the white cottage nestling amidst the shady maples, she saw the figure of her mother in the coolest of linen wrapper, dozing lazily on the porch, with her lap dog napping at her feet. Then she turned and plodded patiently on, over the hot sand. She did not question her mother's commands, if it were wise or kind to send her off on such an errand, under such a burning July sky. If some vague idea of such a nature floated through her mind, she dismissed it instantly. It was for Guy Thornton's sake, that was sufficient.

For a while the road lay fully exposed to the fierce says of the sun, then it entered a little grove of oaks and maples and was here crossed by Wilson Creek, a deep sluggish stream that in the spring freshets always overflowed it banks. In a late inundation the bridge crossing it had been partially swept away, and through negligence had not yet been repaired.

A few planks spanned the chasm for the accommodation of foot travellers and farther down a ford for carriages. A dangerous place in the evening to a stranger, with a slight railing on either side, the only protection from the sure death lurking below, either in the ruined timbers or the black waters of the river. Ray paused half way over the planks to peer down with some such a thought. She started back quickly as she caught a glimpse of her own pale face in the dusky mirror. "It looked as my ghost might have looked," she said with a nervous little laugh, hurrying across to the other side. Here, under the shade of a large oak, she sat down to rest for a moment. For only a moment, but lulled by the sleepy air, the purling water, the monotonous him of insect life, the moment lenghtened into *three, five, ten*, until forgetful of strawberries, and everything else pertaining to mortal earth, she floated away into dream-land. An hour later it might have been, a cloud of dust came sweeping down the road heralded by the dull thud of horse's hoofs.

Ray, wakened from her slumber by the sound, rose slowly to her feet, turning her drowsy eyes in that direction. Suddenly they dilated with some quick feeling, her hand fell motionless at her side, her face grew white. In that dust cloud Guy Thornton was riding to his death. His horse, maddened by some fright had broken completely from his control, and now with flashing eyes and red, dripping mouth. came thundering on to its own doom. There are moments in our lifetime, in which an age of agony is concentrated. In one moment Ray had taken in all the horrors of the situation. The broken bridge—the cruel, jagged timbers, and scarcely less cruel water below. Then as they drew nearer, without even a cry she had sprung forward, and was dragging with all her strength at the broken bridle. She felt a hot sickening breath on her cheek, the foam flecking her face and hair, than a sharp pain in her side, a deafening roar in her ears like the fall of a thousand cataracts and she knew no more. She awoke under the shade of the great oak, her head resting on Guy's arm, his face bending down, almost as white as her own. "Thank God" he said fervently as the great gray eyes flickered open. "Oh Ray—little Ray, speak to me just once, only once." A look of supreme content came into her face, when she saw that he was safe. The white lips moved faintly. He bent eagerly to listen. "Tired,—rest" she breathed, her lids drooping wearily. Then he held her fast, quietly gazing into her eyes, striving to be calm despite the terrible fear tugging at his heart. They sat thus, for a while, her eyes looking steadfastly into his, with a strange beautiful light in their depths he had never seen before, would never see again. What her thoughts were in that time none might ever know. It may have been a recompense, from the kind Father, for all the trials and crosses of her short life, that these last few moments should be filled with a blissful happiness that few ever experience. That into the great eternity she might carry as her last glimpse of earth that dear face she had loved only too well. Suddenly she half rose from his support, her eyes turned up toward the blue sky, then they came back again to his, her head sank her shoulder, and with his name on her lips Ray's sweet life drifted noiselessly out on the great sea if immortality.

OLD GENERAL LEYBOURNE.

One bright September morning, Squire Thornberry paced the long terrace before Sepperton Hall, deep in thought. His brows were knit, his lips compressed, giving an unusual sternness to his bright, happy, genial face.

What was the matter? This: that day several guests were to arrive for the shooting season, and among them was one who, at that particular moment, he scarcely knew how to receive. Should he challenge him?—should he, before the assembled visitors, kick him as he deserved?

They were knotty questions. It was hard that he, with a wife he loved, and a little heir in the nursery, should submit to impertinence. Yet, to thus degrade him, might not be considered the proper course for a gentleman to adopt under the circumstances, though his toe itched very much to do it.

The Squire pondered, then looked up at a certain window. At the same moment, a hand drew aside the curtain, and his wife's fresh, pretty face smiled at him, nodded, and vanished.

"I most decidedly shall kick him," muttered the Squire. "It's all the reptile merits. Fancy, because of that senseless ape, bordering that dear face with a widow's cap! It's absurd! Yet—the rules of honor! I'll ask old General Leybourne."

Turning, the Squire found his wife, in morning toilette, at his side.

Fondly he drew her arm within his, and, for a space apparently forgot the cause of his perturbation.

The recollection came back, however, when, at three o'clock, the carriages sent to the railway station, arrived with the invited guests.

The Squire was standing on the terrace to receive them, and as they drove up the Beech avenue, his glance rested on the last vehicle, a dog-cart, in which sat a particularly effeminate but handsome man, of scarcely thirty, with a fair skin, moustache, an eye-glass, and a perfect toilette.

By his side, in marked contrast, was a gentleman with a heavy, gray, cavalry moustache, a fine bronzed countenance, and a merry face, over which, as he lounged back smoking, was scattered a humorous gleam, as his telling little remarks lashed the exquisite holding the ribbons almost into brain enough to retort.

It was General Leybourne, one of our bronzed Indian veterans.

As the dog-cart stopped before the terrace, Squire Thornberry advanced to meet the new comers.

"Good day, Mr. Norton," he said, shaking hands with the exquisite; "you will find refreshment in the dining-room. General," he added, to the other, dropping his voice, "may I detain you a second?"

The General answered in the affirmative, and the Squire led him away into the grounds.

When there, he said, "My dear Leybourne, as an old and valued friend, I want your advice. If a man sent a love-letter to your wife, what would you do?

"Shoot him," was the laconic rejoinder. "Has any one been sending a letter to yours, my dear Squire?"

"Yes."

"How did you discover it? Stopped it—found it, eh?"

"Neither. Lucy, crimson with anger, brought it me herself."

"Herself! In that case, you are fortunate and safe. When a wife shows such letters to her husband, he is a happy man."

"I am a happy man, General, if a wife's faithful love can make me so," said the Squire, quietly. "What I want to know, is how to treat the fellow who sent it?"

"Shoot him."

"And, perhaps, leave Lucy a widow, in reward for her affection."

"True," responded the General. "In such cases we only think of honor, and not of womankind. May I ask the name, Squire, of this Lothario?"

"The thing you came with in the dog-cart—the Honorable Alfred Norton!"

"He?—that conceited idiot, who believes every woman who looks upon him, from the dairy wench to the duchess, is instantly in love with his elegant person! That fellow, my dear Squire?—powder and ball are too good for him—they do him too much honor! Yet, what can you do? Let me think?"

The General reflected for five minutes, then said, "Edward Thornberry, you have asked my advice. Will you leave this matter entirely in my hands?"

"I will. But must my wife meet this person at dinner?"

"She must; but it does not matter, as she despises him!"

"True. Am I to do anything?"

"Only this. After dinner, while at wine, when you see me play my chain thus, you, in a loud voice, exclaim emphatically, bringing your hand heavily on the table, "Capital! An excellent idea. By Jove! I'd do the same to-morrow."

The Squire was perplexed, but promised to obey, and the old General returned with him to the dining-room.

Three hours later, the guests sat at dinner.

Mrs. Thornberry had joined them only a brief space before, in the drawing-room.

The Squire and the General had marked the languishing glances of the Honorable Alfred Norton, as he greeted his young hostess; the simpering, conceited, "Who-can-resist-me?" air with which he ogled her though his glass.

The Squire's hands had clenched ominously; the toe of his boot slightly rose; but the old soldier's grasp restrained him.

"Wait!" he whispered.

Dinner over, the ladies retired, bowed out by the Honorable Adonis. The gentlemen divided, and drew their chairs in clusters, twos and threes, to enjoy their wine, and were engaged in lively conversation, when suddenly the General's tones, clear and resonant, attracted the guests' attention.

"Fought duels?" he was saying to his neighbor. "I, my lord? Many. As a young man, I was as ready to go out as I was anxious for my

dinner; though, singularly enough, the disputes arose from trivial matters. The only time I had really cause to challenge a man, I did not do so. A woman stayed me."

"As you have taken us so far into your confidence, General, we must have the story," said one of the party.

"Oh, certainly, if you like, Here it is," answered the soldier, readily. "Thirty years ago I married the prettiest woman I had ever met. I was rather her elder; but her affection, I know, was none the less mine. We lived happily for two years, when a conceited puppy, who believe no woman able to resist him, dared to ogle my wife; to this audacity he added that of sending her amorous love-letters. My wife, her pretty face crimson with indignation at the insult, brought them at once to me. 'Herbert,' she said, 'I see what you intend; but you shall not fight this man. He is beneath you—he is unworthy the honor.' 'What, then, would you have me do?' I asked, bursting with passion. 'Would you let him go harmless on his evil course?' 'No,' she answered; 'yet your life shall not be risked for his. He deserves punishment; he shall have it. He adores his own handsome person. To-morrow you join the shooting party—so does he. In the excitement of the sport, my love, though a good shot, you might miss; and if you should happen to hit the wrist of the dandy, he will never write love-verses again.' I embraced my wife—I attended the shooting party. I missed my bird; but, for a month, my darling's correspondent was confined to his bed. When he quitted it, his right arm had been amputated."

"Then you did shoot him?" exclaimed the guests.

The General began playing with his chain, as he answered, "Yes, gentlemen; I shot him in the hand!"

"Capital!" ejaculated the Squire, in a loud voice, bringing his hand heavily on the table, and fixing his gaze steadily upon the Honorable Alfred Norton. "An excellent idea! I'd do the same to-morrow."

* * * * * * * * * * *

The next morning, when the shooting party assembled at breakfast, one seat wes vacant. Where was the Honorable Alfred Norton?

"Gentlemen," explained their host, "particular business called him to London; he departed early this morning."

"Without beat of drum!" concluded General Leybourne, exchanging an amused glance with the Squire.

"I WONDER WHO THEY'RE FOR?"

My ma's been working very hard,
And also very sly,
And keeps her sewing out of sight
Whenever I am nigh.
I asked her once what made her top
Her work when I came in;
She said she only stopped to get
A needle, thread or pin.

The bureau drawer next to mine
Is locked up both night and day,
And when ma wants to open it
She sends me off to play.
I stole a peep one afternoon,
Although it was not right;
But, oh! the little things I saw
Where such a pretty sight!

The cutest, nicest little clothes,
Just big enough for doll—
But then I knew they're not for her—
She needs them not at all.
I know they're not for ma, or pa,
Nor me, nor brother "Hor.,"
For we can't wear such little clothes—
I wonder who they're for?

ALL ROUND THE FIRE.

Our society never met in summer. I hardly know why, but so it was. And therefore it came to pass that we always told our stories by firelight.

One one occasion when we met it was a still, absolutely dark night, so dark that, though the windows were uncurtained, we could see nothing through them, not even the tall lime trees or the white sundial—so still that through the silence we heard the river, far away at the bottom of that garden so familiar to us all, go roaring without pause or rest over the little weir.

The darkness was oppressive. We gathered close round the fire, looking furtively over our shoulders into the deep shadow that filled the corners of the room. None of us spoke: we were waiting for the story to begin. It was not my turn—I had finished—and so we all sat there, waiting in the darkness.

The fire would not blaze—it died down into a red, sullen glow, and the shadow grew each moment blacker. Then, all of a sudden, the story began: this is what it was, as far as I can remember:—

The scene is in Scotland—the time not long before the fatal battle of Preston Pans. There are only four people who will appear in this story. Two of them are a brother and sister, who lived together in a castle in Scotland, not far from the scene of more than one bloody battle—he a gallant young fellow, of dauntless courage, of indomitable resolution, she, nervous, helpless, fanciful, and utterly incapable of aiding him, either by encouragement or counsel. The third person is a friend of hers—a brave, delicate girl, with a courage which, once roused, nothing could daunt, and an inflexibility of purpose which no opposition could thwart.

It was one stormy afternoon, soon after this girl's arrival at the castle, that the young laird received orders to join the army on the next day. He came into the room where his sister was sitting, and told her as gently as he could that he must leave her. Finding after some time that he could not check her hysterical sobs and tears, he went away to find her friend. The moment the girl looked up at him she saw that he had heard news; he seemed almost transfigured with the set purpose in his face and the light in his eyes.

"I am going away," he said—"going to join the army to-morrow — but my poor sister! Comfort her when I am gone, and, if—if I never come back, do not forsake her."

"I will try to comfort her—whatever happens I will not leave her alone."

"I have something more to ask of you, Helen," he said, in a low, firm voice, fixing his keen eyes on her face; "If I did not know how different you are from others, how brave, how enduring, I should not dare to ask it. Will you meet me to-night in the ruins at twelve o'clock, so that I may tell you what it is?"

She paused for a moment, and then said—

"I will."

She was passing on, but he called her back once more.

"I would not fix such an hour," he went on, hurriedly, "if it were not of the utmost importance that no one should know of our meeting."

"I understand," she answered; and thus they parted.

It was no easy task to console the young laird's sister, and Helen sat with her until nearly midnight, holding her hand till she fell asleep, and listening to the sobbing and soughing of the wind along the empty corridors. Presently the great clock pealed out the first stroke of twelve. She rose softly, and, throwing on a long black cloak, ran swiftly down the dark passage, her feet rousing strange echoes in the death-like stillness of the place.

The door which led into the ruined part of the castle was shut, and, as she fumbled at the lock, it was suddenly thrown open, and a tall dark figure caught her by the hand, and drew her out into the night.

"Forgive me," said a well-known voice. "I ought not to bring you out here; but I know your brave spirit of old, and I know that what I ask in such a cause I shall not ask in vain. You know where we are now?"

"In the ruined hall;" and, as she spoke, she looked up, and saw the clouds racing over her head.

The young laird was leading her forward, in and out among the quaint old pillars, which stood like ghosts in the dimness. She shuddered a little in the wind, and he took his cloak and folded it round her.

"Are you afraid?" he asked, bending down, and looking into her face, while the light of the lantern flashed in his brave, bright eyes. "It is cruel of me to ask so much of you."

"No, it is not," she said, steadily. "I am not afraid. I will try to do anything you wish me to do."

They went on together in silence till they came to a buttress in the wall, where the young man stopped short.

"Are you ready? Then follow me."

He touched a spring in the wall, a trap-door flew open, he drew her in after him, and in one minute they were shut in with a darkness which would have been complete had it not been for the feeble light of the small lantern.

They went along a narrow passage, and then once more they stopped. A door opened and closed again after them, and there they were locked up in a little room, where no cry of theirs could reach the outer air, nor any sound from without pierce those walls; only far up over their heads there was a small square hole round which the ivy rustled faintly, but through which, even in the daytime, no sky was to be seen, and at night neither moon nor stars.

"Now are you afraid?" asked the young soldier, almost gaily, as he turned round to his companion.

"No," she answered again.

"Once more I must ask you to follow me," he said, kneeling down in the centre of the room and feeling about on the floor. In a moment more he had found the spring; another trap-door opened, and disclosed a dark and narrow flight of steps. He went down a little way, and then held up his hand to help his companion. At the foot of the steps were several large chests.

"All those are full of money to be used in our cause," he said. "And now I come to what I have to ask you."

He paused for a moment.

The gloom and loneliness of the place — the stillness which seemed almost to speak—were filling the girl's heart with a strange, indefinable terror.

"Tell me now," she said; "I am ready."

"You know," he began, "how I am situated—whose part I take in these unhappy times. You know also by what a feeble thread the sword hangs over our heads, what a small thing would ruin us. You know all this, and yet I ask you to take upon yourself a task in which the least deviation from the instructions I give you will be rain, and the least failing of your memory death to us all. You understand?"

She bowed her head in silence.

"And you will do it?"

"If I die in the attempt," was her reply.

"Then," he cried, enthusiastically, "you will do a thing which any man or woman might be proud to have done—faithfully. You know the old yew tree by the castle gates? Some evening after I am gone you will see an arrow in that tree, and by that sign you will know that we are in need of money for our cause. There may be more than one arrow—as many arrows as there are, so many bags of gold shall we require. Now I come to the hard part of your task. There is no one else but you to whom I can safely entrust this secret. No one else in all the world but you and I know of the place where our money is kept, and no one must ever know unless I fall. You begin to see my meaning now, I think? When you see the arrow, you must come at midnight to this secret room, looking carefully to see that you are not followed, and you must take the money to my messenger at the gate. But that is not all. You will then have to bring back a signed paper which the messenger will give you as a witness that he has received the money, and you must come down here again and put the paper in one of these chests. If you cannot do this thing, do not hesitate to tell me so before it it too late."

"I will do it," she answered raising a steadfast face to his.

"Before we go," he said, as they were mounting the steps, "you must observe this trap-door in the floor. When you go down you must not forget first to fasten it firmly back with this chain, for if it falls and shuts you down here you are lost."

They passed through the two other doors and went back to the castle, where they parted, neither knowing whether they should ever meet in life again.

The following morning the laird was gone, and all Helen's strength and spirits were required to cheer and console his sister.

Weeks passed away and they heard only once of him. One evening Helen was sitting in the deep window-seat of the old room which they usually occupied, tired out with a long and anxious day, and her friend's tears, murmurings, and dismal prophecies. She was looking out, watching the cold rain fall heavily in the twilight, listening to the low sighing of the wind in the great yew tree outside. Suddenly, like a flash, something shot through the air and fell gleaming into the branches.

It was the arrow—come at last!

The girl rose, and, after waiting for a few moments to see that it was not followed by another, left the room, to make the needful preparations for her midnight expedition.

Helen was no coward, and yet, when twelve o'clock pealed solemnly from the old tower, and all the house was buried in the profoundest silence, her heart beat a little fast and her breath came quick.

She stole down the creaking stairs, lifted the heavy bar of the door, and in another moment stood outside in the ruins."

She stood still to listen. The rain splashed softly on the broken pavement, rustled in the ivy, streamed ceaselessly, like the murmuring of many weird voices such as may be heard in dreams sometimes. Now and again a low wind moaned through the cracked walls, breathed on her face, and shook the raindrops from the whispering ivy.

The girl, wrapped in her large cloak, flew noiselessly along, reached the buttress, touched the spring, and then once more turned to look round.

No one—death itself could not have been more silent.

The door opened, she passed through, gained the room, and, without daring to stop a moment, she descended the steps. By this time she was getting roused and nerved to her work; she took one small bag of gold and, putting it under her cloak, she let herself out once more into the ruins. Now that she found that she had not forgotten how to open the door, her courage returned, and as she ran on between the mouldering pillars, she felt almost brave. The messenger was at the gate. She put the money into his hand, and returned once more with the signed paper. This was the worst part of all, and to the end Helen never got over the dread that possessed her on returning to the gloom and cold and silence.

She went often after this. Many more times the arrows gleamed in the yew tree, the messenger waited, and Helen's task had to be done—whatever the weather, whatever her fears. I think, if it had not been for the consciousness that a whole army had placed its safety, its honor in her hands, she could hardly have borne all that she did—the dread of discovery, the perpetual nameless terror.

One afternoon a fearful storm broke over the castle; trees were uprooted and hurled to the ground, the rain beat against the windows, the air was filled with the howls and shrieks of the wind. Helen stood, as was her custom, every evening, when the dusk began to fall, watching at the window. She was thinking what a wild night it would be for a midnight expedition, and looking a little anxiously for the arrows.

One, two, three—there were. The girl counted them as they fell. Suddenly a gust more fearful than any that had come before swept round the castle. There was a groan, a sound more like a wail than anything else, a crash—and the yew tree lay prostrate on the ground. Poor old tree! Its work was over, and now the wind danced over it exultantly, and whirled in wild mad fury around it.

Helen trimmed her little lantern carefully that night. When she stepped out into the ruins the rain had ceased, and a pale sad moon shone at intervals between great rolling clouds. The wind still howled through the old walls; every stone was rocking with the fury of the tempest, every leaf bent to the sweeping blast. At intervals there would come sudden lulls; and in those lulls the girl almost fancied she could hear sobbing voices and feeble cries. She walked quickly on till she was about half way, and then stopped, as the laird had cautioned her, to listen that no one might follow her.

The wind dropped for a moment: there was complete calm. One minute—then through the silence came footsteps! To assure herself that it was no delusion, Helen waited.

Nearer—nearer—then, as suddenly, they ceased.

What was it? Who was it? Whence came those solemn, echoing foot-falls? Whither had they gone?

She waited and listened; but no sound broke the stillness, till the wind rose once more, and shook the old ruins till they rocked to their foundation.

Another lull, and then she called—

"Who goes there?"

Not a sound—not a whisper—only the rapid beating of her own heart.

Then she went on and opened the door, performed her task and, coming out once more, ran quickly to the messenger. He stood as usual outside. She gave him the money, received the paper, and, wishing him good night, prepared again to meet the storm.

She had been brave enough before, but now her courage seemed to be oozing away from her. She walked steadily along, however, holding the paper tight under her cloak, and shielding her lantern, as well as she could, from the wind. Suddenly, amid the roar of the storm, there came again those sounds which she dreaded so much to hear—steady footsteps, strange echoes—and, on her part, horrible surmises.

"I am pursued!" she thought. "I have been tracked; and all is lost!"

What could she do?

While she stood there wondering, the sounds came nearer and nearer, till she almost fancied that she could see a dim shape gliding towards her. Whatever happened, the paper must be restored, and her promise fulfilled; so, without hesitating another moment, she sprang forward, determined to trust to her own strength and activity alone.

On she flew, round pillars, through gloomy arches, filled with moaning voices, through deserted halls, which rang to her footsteps as she ran, down dark and broken steps, pursuing her way through many half-choked entrances.

Still after her came those footsteps, steady, unflinching.

The buttress was gained — where was the spring?

The dim shape was close to her now; in another moment her last hope would be gone. Suddenly her trembling fingers found the spring—the door flew open. She rushed in, closed it swiftly, noiselessly, and was safe, but in total, impenetrable darkness. Her lantern was out, and she was there alone with silence and black gloom.

Half dead with terror and exhaustion, and hardly realising her safety, she darted into the inner room, and sprang down the steps. There was a great fall, and then like a flash the knowledge of what she had done came upon her. The trap-door over her head had dropped, and she was as one dead, buried in a grave from which no living soul could extricate her. She dared not call—what, too, would have been the use?—for fear of betraying the secret. She could not raise the door; it lay, a dead weight of iron, over her head. There was nothing for it, and so, kneeling down, she prayed for death.

"At least," she thought, "the secret is still his and mine alone."

She groped about, found a chest, lay down on it, and patiently awaited her fate. Now that she was brought face to face with death, she did not quail—she was almost ready to meet it.

The slow hours crept on. Outside the sad gray day dawned, and passed slowly and heavily away. Then she lost consciousness, and knew nothing more.

Long, long after her life began slowly to come back to her. Somebody was pouring brandy down he throat, raising up, speaking to her, chafing her cold hands.

"Who are you?" she said, feebly. "I thought that I was dead."

"I am the messenger," was the answer, after she had sufficiently recovered to sit up. "I followed you on the last night on which you came here because I admired your conduct so much, and I thought that I would see you safe on such a wild night. The second time—when you returned with the paper — I thought that you looked unfit for your hard task, and I wished to follow and be near you. I saw you disappear. I waited for hours, but you never returned, and I determined to come back to-night and find out whether any accident had happened to you. I had long suspected the existence of a secret room, and when I watched you disappear behind the buttress, my suspicions were still more strongly roused. Last night the secret was confided to me, and I went to the castle, and, finding that you had not been missed, I did not rest till I had made sure of the clue, and discovered you here. Are you strong enough to hear bad news?"

"The laird is dead?" she said.

"Yes," answered the messenger, sadly; "he was killed in a terrible battle which was fought yesterday. It was on account of the confusion and distress occasioned at the castle by his death that you were not missed before."

There was a long silence, and then Helen left the secret chamber never to re-enter it. Her solitary midnight expeditions were over, for be-

fore his death the laird had entrusted the secret to his faithful friend, the messenger, a young soldier of much promise.

The laird's sister soon found consolation in matrimony, and left Scotland for ever. As to Helen, I cannot tell you much about her. I have heard it said that she and the messenger kept the secret together, and that she married him not very long after the departure of the laird's sister, but of that I cannot right speak.

The story ended, as it had begun, dreamily and suddenly. The fire was out. We groped our way out of the room into the dark garden, and there parted—very quietly and silently. The person who had told the story said something more before the meeting broke up, but only these few words :

"The story is true ; I can vouch for it on very good authority."

ON THE MOOR.

BY L. E. X.

Side by side in the purple heather,
The sun on our faces that day at noon,
For one last time we stood together,
That beautiful golden day in June.

Over the moor I came to meet her,
The purple moor dotted over with gold—
Gold of gorses—to meet and greet her,
My beautiful love in the days of old.

My one dear love, my sweet wild blossom,
My loving brown birdie with shy glad eyes,
Who flew away from my lonely bosom
To finish her singing in Paradise.

I stand alone, where close together,
We stood in the sunshine, my love and I ;
The glow has faded from gorse and heather,
And evening shadows creep over the sky.

We stood that day our lives before us,
How sweet was the story we thought to write ;
The brown lark carolled that morning o'er us,
The moor is as silent as death to-night.

I stand alone and think of the story,
The tale of our lives that never was told ;
That midsummer morning flushed with glory,
The heath all royal with purple and gold.

And God, who gathered my blossom, knoweth
My lonely sorrow ; my spirit that longs
For the quiet land, where my darling goeth
Her happy way hearing angel-songs.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

Broken Off.—An old gentleman of seventy was going to be married to a girl of seventeen. One day a friend surprised him tenderly embracing his intended. "I don't wonder at your astonishment," said the young lady, readily, to the intruder; "you don't generally expect to find old heads on young shoulders." The marriage was broken off.

Our Lives.—Probably there is not one of us who has come to middle age who does not often have moods in which he would gladly lay down his own old self, and be literally born again—a new man, unfettered by past obligations, uninjured by past mistakes. We dream about what we would do, if we could begin anew; but dreaming is only dreaming, and wishes are not horses for any of us to ride. Such as we have made our own lives we must live them.

Swearing.—In Connecticut a certain magistrate was called to jail to liberate a worthless debtor. "Well, John," said the magistrate, on entering, "can you answer that you are not worth twenty dollars, and never will be?" "Why," answered the other, rather chagrined at the question, "I can swear that I am not worth that amount at present." "Well, well," returned the magistrate, "I can swear the rest; so go along." And the man was sworn and discharged.

Lions.—Dickens and Landseer, the author and artist, were dining together, when a servant entered and calmly inquired, "If you please, Sir Edwin, did you order a lion?" The horror of Dickens may be imagined — the gardens of the Zoological Society not being far distant; but it was no live lion that the servant was inquiring about. One of those noble animals had recently died at the Gardens, and then the menagerie authorities wished to know whether Sir Edwin wished — as he frequently did — to sketch the carcass before it was buried.

Relieved.—A bachelor, who was somewhat stricken in years, had been for sometime enamoured with one of the sisterhood, but could not muster courage to pop the question. One morning he was resolved to make the attempt. He accordingly went to the house of the lady, knocked at the door, and she made her appearance. After a mutual nod, the following laconic dialogue ensued: "Do you want to change your condition"—"No,"—"Nor I."—And turning about, our bachelor concluded the conversation with, "Thank heaven, I got that load off my mind!"

The Cat out of the Bag.—Lord Chancellor Cranworth offered the late Dean Alford, in 1855, a lucrative living in Cornwall, which he declined, wishing to remain in or near London. After having made up his mind not to accept the living, he went to call on Lord Cranworth, to thank him. The result must be told in the Dean's own words. "When I asked to see his lordship, the servant said his master was engaged. I then said, 'I am not come to ask for anything, but to refuse something offered.' 'Oh, sir, then I am sure he will see you,' was the reply."

The Vatican.—The Papal Palace at Rome is called the Vatican, from its situated on the Mons Vaticanus, at the extreme northwest part of the city. It adjoins the basilica of St. Peter, and is a little less than half a mile from the Castle of St. Angelo, with which it communicates by a covered gallery built by John XXIII, about the beginning of the fifteenth century. The palace, which now ranks as one of the most interesting and magnificent in the world, has grown up by degrees, and consequently exhibits a great want of harmony in architectural proportions. Very little of the present edifice is older than the time of Nicholas V (1447).

Good and Better.—Nothing living stands still. Not at school only, but through life, men are constantly comparing the adjectives, "good, better, best," "bad, worse, worst." And systems are like men. They purify or pollute what passes through them. And institutions, like trees, "bringing forth fruit after their kind," grow in the power to bless or to curse. Even when they are killed, an evil odour, like that of the frogs of Egypt, remains behind, and the men who grew up under the bad system or the mischievous institution are spoiled for the enjoyment, or the improvement, of a better.

Roses and Ladies.—A well-known German florist related, in a high state of irritation, his troubles in this way. He said :—"I have so much drouble mit de ladies ven they come to buy rose ; dey vants him hardy, dey vants him doubles, dey vants him moontly, day vants him fragrand, dey vants him nice gooler, dey vants him efery dings in one rose. I hopes I am not vat you calls von uncallant man, but I have sometimes to say to dat ladies, "Madame, I never often sees dat ladies dat vas rich, dat vas good temper, dat vas young, dat vas clever, dat vas handsom, dat vas perfection in one ladies." I see her much not."

Ill-Temper.—A single person of sour, sullen temper—what a dreadful thing to have such a one in the house! There is not myrrh and aloes and chloride of lime enough in the world to disinfect a single home of such a nuisance as that; no riches, no elegance of mien, no beauty of face, can ever screen such persons from utter vulgarity. There is one thing which rising persons hate the reputation of more than all others, and that is vulgarity; but ill-temper is the vulgarest thing that the lowest born and illest bred can never bring to his home. It is one of the worst forms of impiety. Peevishness in a home is naught but sin in the very temple of love.

A Mother's Worth.—Many a discouraged mother folds her tired hands at night, and feels as if she had, after all, done nothing, although she had not spent an idle moment since she rose. Is it nothing that your little helpless children have had some one to come to with all their childish griefs and joys? Is it nothing that your husband feels "safe" when he is away to his business, because your careful hand directs everything at home? Is it nothing, when his business is over, that he has the blessed refuge of home, which you have that day done you best to brighten and refine? Oh, weary and faithful mother! you little know your power when you say, 'I have done nothing." There is a book in which a fairer record than this is written over against your name.

Where they Differ.—It is only when a workman is not really interested in his business that he anxiously awaits the hour which ends his daily toil, and "stands not upon the order of his going." George Eliot makes note of this essential difference between men who take pride in their trade and those who are indifferent, and expresses her thoughts through one of the characters in Adam Bede! "I can't abide to see men throw away tools i' that way the minute the clock begins to strike, as if they took no pleasure i' their work, and was afraid o' doin' a stroke too much. I hate to see a man's arms drop down as if he was shot before the clock's fairly struck, as if he'd never a bit o' pride and delight in 's work. The very grindstone 'll go on turning a bit after you loose it." For that matter, does not every created thing read man a lesson on industry.

Hired by the Day.—Sauners, the carpenter, was employed by a Glasgow dominie, who stood looking on while the carpenter while he worked whistled the air of "Maggie Lauder."—"Sauners!"—No answer from the busy carpenter.—"Sauners! I say. Can ye no hear me?"—"Yes, minister, I hear ye. What's yer wull?"—"Can ye no whistle some mair solemn godly tune while ye're at your work?"—"A-weel, minister, if it be your wull." Upon which he changed the air to the "Dead March" in *Saul*, greatly to the hindrance of what was now painful planing. The dominie looked on for some minutes in silence, and then said, "Sauners, I hae anither word to say till ye. Did the gude wife hire ye by the day's darg or by the job?"—"The day's darg was our agreeing, maister."—"Then, on the whole, Sauners, I think ye maun just as weel gae back to whistling bonnie 'Maggie Lauder.'"

"His Mark."—In ancient times, the mark of the cross was not invariably a proof of ignorance; for among the Saxons the mark of the cross, as an attestation of the good faith of the person signing, was required to be attached to the signature of those who could write, as well as to stand in the place of the signature of those who could not write. In those times, if a man could write, or even read, his knowledge was considered proof presumptive that he was in holy orders. The clericus, or clerk, was synonymous with penman; and the laity, or people who were not clerks, did not feel any urgent necessity for the use of letters. The ancient use of the cross was therefore universal, alike by these who could and those who could not write; it was, indeed, the symbol of an oath, from its sacred associations, as well as the mark generally adopted. Hence the origin of the expression, "God save the mark," as a form of ejaculation approaching the character of an oath.

Live Like Lovers.—Married people should treat each other like lovers all their lives—then they would be happy. Bickering and quarrelling would soon break off love affairs ; consequently lovers indulge in such only to a very limited extent. But some people—men and women both—when they have once got married, think that they can do just as they please, and it will make no difference. They make a great mistake. It will make all the difference in the world. Women should grow more devoted and men more fond after marriage, if they have the slightest idea of being happy as wives and husbands. It is losing sight of this fundamental truth which leads to hundreds of divorces. Yet many a man will scold his wife who would never think of breathing a harsh word to his sweetheart ; and many a wife will be glum and morose on her husband's return who had only smiles and words of cheer for him when he was her suitor. How can such people expect to be happy?

Mrs. Henrietta Hirschfield, the celebrated dentist of Berlin, is described as a delicately formed, refined, beautiful woman. She has developed a wonderful strength in her small hand, extracting a firmly-set molar with a dexterity and precision unsurpassed by any of her stronger brethren. But her greatest attraction lies in her mental and moral power. You cannot be with her a moment, says a correspondent, without feeling you are in the presence of a living being, a person instinct with power, courage, and the fullness and realization of true life. She invigorates and tones you up like a cool sea breeze after a sultry day. Mrs. Hirschfield does not confine herself merely to the labors of her office, but prepares well written articles for the magazine, instructing mothers in regard to the care of children's teeth, and impressing upon them the paramount duty of cleanliness and attention to the mouth, a duty but little practised in Germany.

Men Milliners. — The first milliners were bearded men. It was a tailor, not a mantuamaker in the modern sense of the word who brought home Katharine's new gown to the house of Petruchio. Nor did the comparatively simple and becoming attire of the ladies of feudal times changed by any means so often from the decorous grace of its original type as that of their more fickle lords. There is less difference, satirically speaking, between Queen Eleanor and Margaret of Anjou, between Berengaria and Isabel of France, then between the men of their respective times. They never made themselves sublimely ridiculous, as masculine vanity so constantly urged the fops of the period to do. Until we reach the bristling ruffs and steeple hats of Elizabeth's reign, there is nothing—unless it be the fantastic contrast of colors brought in by Henry the Sixth's imperious consort—to provoke a smile, from the days of the Confessor to those of the Defender of the Faith.

Cash Instead of Credit.—People who buy for cash always buy cheaper than those who buy on credit. They buy too more closely, and select more carefully. Purchases which are paid for when they are made are limited more exactly to the purchaser's wants. There is nothing like having to count the money out when the article is bought, to make people economical. The amount of indebtedness incurred is not much considered when the pay-day is far off. Persons who do all their business on a cash basis know just where they stand and what they can afford; consequently they never find after-occasion for regretting, in a turn of times, that they have indulged in this luxury or that, which they would have foregone had they seen what was coming. Real wants are few, and can be gratified for cash ; at all events they should always be limited to what can be paid for in cash. How much of anxiety, how many sleepless hours, how many heart-burnings, disappointments, and regrets would be avoided if this rule were always strictly adhered to.

Occupation for Children. — The active habits of the children prove that occupation is a necessity with most of them. They love to be busy, even about nothing, still more to be usefully employed. With some children it is a strongly developed necessity, and if not turned to good account will be productive of evil, thus verifying the old adage that "idleness is the mother of mischief." Children should be encouraged, or if indolently disinclined to it, should be disciplined into performing for themselves every little office relative to the toilet which they are capable of performing. They should keep their own clothes and other possessions in neat order, and fetch for themselves whatever they want; in short, they should learn to be as independent of others as possible, fitting them alike to make good use of prosperity, and to meet with fortitude any reverse of fortune that may befall them. We know of no rank, however exalted, in which such a system would not prove beneficial.

Salulations. — In the West Indies the negroes say, "Have you had a good sleep?" The Pelew Islanders seize the foot of the person they desire to salute, and rub their faces with it ; and New Guinea people place on their heads leaves of trees, as emblems of peace and friendship. The Romans, in ancient times, exclaimed ; "What doest thou?" "Be healthy!" or "Be strong!" It was also customary to take up children by the ears and kiss them. Japanese remove their sandals when they meet a superior, exclaiming, "Hurt me not!" Manilas bend their bodies, place their hands upon their cheeks, raise one leg and bend the knee. Persians salute by inclining neck over neck, and then cheek to cheek, with the extravagant greeting "Is thy exalted high condition good?" "May thy shadow never be less!" and "Peace be upon thee!" In Poland the inhabitants bow to the ground with the significant inquiry, "Art thou gay?" and "How hast thou thyself?" Russian ladies permit not only their hands but their foreheads to be kissed by friends. The men salute by inquiring, "How do you live on?" and "Be well."

Algerian Coral.—The richest banks of coral, and the most beautiful coral in the world, are to be found off the coast of Algeria. In the sixteenth century France had the privilege of this fishery, and the coral industry flourished greatly at Marseilles. During the wars of the Empire, however, England deprived France of the right of the fisheries, which were then abandoned to the Greeks and Sicilians. At present the industry has taken root in Italy, where the low cost of manual labor makes it very prosperous. The coral fishery of Algeria was, in 1871, done by 220 vessels (58 of which were foreign), each of them being manned by eight or ten men, and it yielded 31,334 kilogrammes, valued at 2,380,050 francs. In 1872 only 131 boats were employed ; the discovery of new banks on the Sardinian coast being the only cause of this diminution, in spite of which the fishery was more productive than in the previous year; it produced 32,040 kilogrammes of coral, having a value of 2,408,675 francs. Divers' jackets and diving bells have been forbidden, as tending to injure the bottom. Each bank is divided into ten parts, only one of which is "exploited" each year.

Idleness.—Many young people think that an idle life must be a pleasant one ; but there are none who enjoy so little, and are such burdens to themselves as those who have nothing to do. Those who are obliged to work hard all day enjoy their short periods of rest and recreation so much, that they are apt to think if their whole lives were spent in rest and recreation it would be the most pleasant of all. But this is a sad mistake, as they would soon find out if they made a trial of the life they think so agreeable. One who is never busy can never enjoy rest; for rest implies a relief from previous labor: and if our whole time were spent in amusing ourselves, we should find it more wearisome than the hardest day's work. Recreation is only valuable as it unbends us; the idle can know nothing of it. Many people leave off business and settle down to a life of enjoyment; but they generally find that they are not nearly so happy as they were before, and they are often glad to return to their old occupations to escape the miseries of indolence.

HOUSEHOLD RECEIPTS.

Grease Spots.—To remove grease spots from books, moisten the spot with a camel-hair pencil dipped in spirits of wine.

Potato Cheesecakes. — Four ounces of mashed potatoes, butter, flour, and sugar, and two eggs; mix altogether with a fork, and bake in tins lined with puff paste.

To Settle Coffee.—As soon as it is browned and while yet warm mix with it a well-beaten egg—say one egg to a pound. This forms a cover round the kernels, preserving the aroma, and when ground is an admirable settler.

Blanc-Mange —Cut very thin the rind of a small lemon, and infuse it for an hour in a pint and three-quarters of new milk, with eight bitter almonds blanched and bruised, two ounces of sugar, and an ounce and a half of isinglass. Boil gently over a clear fire.

Remedy for Croup.—The following is an effective remedy for croup: "Half a teaspoonful of pulverized alum in a little treacle. It is a simple remedy, one almost always at hand, and one dose seldom fails to give relief. If it should, repeat it after one hour."

Healing Virtues of the Geranium.—It seems this popular plant has another claim on our esteem aside from its beauty and fragrance, It is said that an application of one or two of its leaves, first bruised, to a cut or abrasion, will heal the wound in a very short time.

Smoked Meat on Toast.—Take a cold smoked tongue or ham that has been well boiled, and grate it with a coarse grater, or mince it fine; mix it with cream and beaten yolk of egg, and let it simmer over the fire. Prepare some nice slices of toast, butter them rather slightly, lay them in a flat dish that has been heated over the fire, and cover each slice with the meat mixture that should be spread on hot. Place on the table in a covered dish, for either breakfast or supper.

Good Plain Family Irish Stew.—Take about two pounds of scrag or neck of mutton; divide it into ten pieces, and lay them in the pan. Cut eight large potatoes and four onions into slices; season with one teaspoonful and a

half of pepper and three of salt. Cover all with water; put it into a slow oven for two hours, then stir it all up well, and dish up in deep dishes. If you add a little more water at the commencement, you can take out when half done a nice cup of broth.

Sherry Cobbler.—Lay in the bottom of a large tumbler, two table-spoonfuls of powdered loaf sugar, and squeeze over it, (through a strainer) the juice of a large lemon that has been softened by rolling under your hand. Then half fill the tumbler with ice, broken very small. Add a large glass of very good sherry wine. Take another tumbler, and pour the liquid back and forward from glass to glass, till completely mixed without stirring. Sip it through a clean straw, or one of the tubes made on purpose.

Stewed Pigeons.—Clean and cut them in quarters. Wash and season with pepper and salt; put them into a stewpan, with as much water as will nearly cover them. Put in a piece of butter mixed with a little flour. Let them stew until they become quite tender. If the gravy should be too thin, add a piece of butter rubbed in flour, and let them stew a few minutes longer. When done, if not sufficiently seasoned, more may be added. Then send to table hot.

Egg-nogg.—Beat, till very light and thick, the yolks only of six eggs. Stir the eggs, gradually, into a quart of rich unskimmed milk, and add half a pound of powdered loaf sugar, a half pint of brandy, and a grated nutmeg. Next beat three whites of the eggs by themselves, and stir them quickly into the mixture. Divide it into two pitchers, and pour it backward and forward from one pitcher to the other till it has a fine froth. Then serve it in a large china bowl, with a silver ladle in it, and distribute it in glasses with handles.

Mutton Cutlets.—Take cutlets from the best end of a neck of mutton; trim off the fat, pith, and gristle, and bare the bone about an inch and a half; then dip each cutlet into a well-beaten egg, lay it in a plate of breadcrumbs and cover each side. Have ready a pan of hot lard, and lay the cutlets in, and fry them to a pale brown color (twenty minutes), turning them when one side is done. The meat should not be thicker than the bone of the cutlet, and should be flattened with a chopper. Serve with tomato, sharp, or other sauce.

Collared Beef.—Take the best part of a shin of beef, of which soup has been made (for it must be stewed very tender), and an ox-tail also well stewed; cut them into small pieces, season them well, add a glass of catsup, and put it into a stewpan, covered with a part of the liquor in which the ox-tail has been boiled; stew for about twenty minutes, and put it into a mould. It must be very cold before it is turned out. A few chopped sweet herbs may be added, and hard eggs cut into slices; or pickles, such as sliced cucumbers, intermingled. The flavor may be varied in many ways.

Horseradish Sauce.—Grate as much horseradish as will fill a breakfast cup, mix with it two teaspoonfuls of powdered white sugar and one each of salt and pepper, a dessert-spoonful of made mustard, and enough vinegar to make the whole as thick as a rich cream. A small cupful of cream is also a great improvement. To use with roast beef, the sauce is heated by being placed in a jar in the oven till warm, but it must not boil; and it is very good cold, to eat with various cold meats. Double this quantity may be made at a time, and it will keep for some weeks if bottled.

Curry Fish.—Put into the pot four onions and two apples in thin slices, some thyme or savory, with a quarter of a pound of fat or dripping, three tablespoonfuls of salt, one tablespoonful of sugar, and fry for fifteen minutes. Then, pour in three quarts of water and one pound of rice. Boil till tender; add one tablespoonful of curry powder, mixed in a little water. Cut up six pounds of cheap fish the size of an egg, add to the above, and boil for twenty or thirty minutes, according to the kind of fish. If no herbs, do without; but always use what you can get.

Chicken Salad.—Boil or roast a pair of chickens, mince fine all the tender meat, white and dark, chop the white part of a large head of celery with a couple of young heads of lettuce and mix them with the chicken. Boil half a dozen eggs 20 minutes, nib the yolks smooth with a spoon and mix with them two teaspoonfuls of made English mustard, a teaspoonful of salt, two table-spoonfuls of salad oil or melted butter, a desert spoonful of white sugar and half a pint of strong vinegar. Pour the dressing over the chicken and celery in a salad-bowl, and garnish with the white of the eggs cut in rings.

Croquettes.—The remains of any cold fish—turbot, cod, or haddock being best. Remove all skin and bones most carefully, then mash the fish free from all lumps in a "pounder;" add a piece of butter, pepper, salt, and mace (and if you have any cold crab or lobster sauce so much the better). Form the fish into portions the size and shape of an egg; if too soft, a few bread crumbs may be added. Dip each portion into an egg well beaten up, and then into fine bread crumbs. Fry a golden brown in boiling lard, drain, and serve on a napkin garnished with fried parsley, or on a dish with Tartare sauce.

Haricot.—Take off some of the fat, and cut the middle or best end of the neck into rather thin steaks; flour and dry them in their own fat of a fine light brown, but not enough for eating. Then put them into a dish while you fry the carrots, turnips, and onions; the carrots and turnips in discs, the onions sliced; but they must only be warmed, not browned, or you need not fry them. Then lay the steaks at the bottom of a stew-pan, the vegetables over them, and pour as much boiling water as will just cover them; give one boil, skim well, and then set the pan on the side of the fire to simmer gently till tender. In three or four hours skim them; and add pepper, salt, and a spoonful of ketchup.

Roast Goose.—When the goose is well picked, singed, and cleaned, make the stuffing. For this take two good-sized onions and an ounce of green sage; chop fine. If the strong flavor of the onions be objected to, put them in boiling water, and let them simmer for about five minutes previous to chopping them. Take a large breakfast-cupful of stale, bread-crumbs and a little pepper and salt; add these to the onion and sage, and mix all well together with an egg. Stuff the goose, not quite filling it, but leaving a little room for the stuffing to swell. Secure it well, and roast for about two hours at a moderately brisk fire. Serve with gravy and apple-sauce.

Mint Julep.—Cut two or three round slices from a fine ripe pine-apple that has been pared; and take out the core or hard part from the centre of each slice. A still better way is to split down the pine-apple into four pieces, and grate two of the quarters with a coarse grater, standing it upright while doing so. Put it into a large tumbler, and cover the fruit with two or three heaped table-spoonfuls of powdered loaf sugar. Add a large glass of the best brandy, and pour on cold water till the tumbler is two-thirds full. Then put in a thick layer of finely broken ice, till it almost reaches the top. Finish by sticking in a full bunch of fresh green mint in handsome sprigs, that rise far above one side of the tumbler; and at the other side place a clean straw, or one of the tubes used for the same purpose.

Plain Lobster Salad.—Take a well boiled lobster. Extract all the meat from the body and claws, cut it up small, and mash the coral with the back of a spoon or a broad knife. Wash the best part of a fresh lettuce, and cut that up also, omitting all the stalk. Mix together the chopped lobster and the lettuce, and put them into a salad bowl. Make the dressing in a deep plate, allowing for one lobster a salt-spoon of salt, half as much of cayenne, a tea-spoonful of made mustard (tarragon mustard is best), four table-spoonfuls or more of sweet oil, and three table-spoonfuls of the best vinegar. Mix all these together, with the yolks of three hard-boiled eggs, mashed to a soft, moist paste with the other ingredients, adding the coral of a lobster. When they are all mixed smoothly, add them to the lobster and lettuce. If the mixture seems too dry, add more sweet oil. Toss and stir the salad with a box-wood fork. Also, the things should be mashed with a box-wood spoon. Cover, and set it in a cool place till wanted. It should be eaten as soon as possible after mixing, as it becomes flat by standing. Plenty of sweet oil renders a lobster wholesome.

Hints on Preparing Macaroni.—Macaroni, whether served is a sweet or savory dish, must invariably go through the preparatory process of boiling. This fact is self-evident to the veriest novice in the culinary art; but *il y a fagots et fagots*, so there are cooks and cooks, there is boiling and boiling. To the *method*, therefore, of the latter I would call attention, as it is upon this apparently simple point success finally depends. Put the macaroni into a stewpan and pour upon it sufficient boiling water to cover it; add a tablespoonful of salt, and let it boil gently for ten minutes, then strain it. This water will have extracted the sour flavor which macaroni *never fails to have* if this precaution be omitted. Put the maraconi back into the stewpan, and cover it with milk, or milk and water, and let it boil *gently* until it is tender; then strain it, and it will be ready to prepare as a pudding or with cheese as required. For the latter, to the proportion of half a pound of macaroni would be required six ounces of Parmesan cheese grated, a quarter of a pound of butter, a pint of milk, and a few bread-crumbs, pepper, and salt. Put the macaroni into a dish, and sprinkle amongst it the cheese (reserving some for the top layer), &c., with part of the butter cut into small pieces; now put the cheese you reserved over the top, and cover it with bread-crumbs; warm, but do not oil, the remainder of the butter; pour it over the top, then brown it with a salamander or in front of the fire, but do not on any account place it in the oven, as it will oil the butter and give it a strong flavor.

He Burnt His Foot.—A West Indian, who had a remarkably red nose, having fallen asleep in his chair, a negro boy, who was in waiting, observed a mosquito hovering round his face. Quashey eyed it very attentively; at last it lit upon his master's nose, and instantly flew off again. "Yah, yah!" he exclaimed, with great glee; "me berry glad to see you burn your fut!"

The Lawyer's Portrait.—A certain lawyer had his portrait taken in his favorite attitude—standing with one hand in his pocket. His friends and clients all went to see it, and everybody exclaimed:

"Oh, how like! It's the very picture of him!"

An old farmer only dissented.

"'Tain't like!" exclaimed everybody. "Just show us where 'tain't like?"

"'Tain't—no, 'tain't!" responded the farmer. "Don't you see he has got his hand in his own pocket? 'twould be as like again if he had it in somebody else's."

OUR PUZZLER.

93. DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

The primals name a general
To tyranny a foe;
The finals will before your eyes
A Polish hero show.

1. This is a port on British land,
And at a river's mouth does stand.

2. It is, as history does state,
The birthplace of the "Man of Fate."

3. A general does this one tell;
Attacking Baltimore, he fell.

4. Here a ruler of Cyprus is shown.
And whom an English king did dethrone.

5. The city that does now appear,
Is to a well-known desert near.

6. A poet you must now descry,
Who with a Stuart's wife did fly.

7. A prince, whose name is known to you,
Here once a massacre did view.

8. In fields and gardens it does grow;
A certain box does also show.

9. This last one may be seen
In Shakspere's "Cymbelline."

94. ARITHMETICAL QUESTION.

A window, measuring 6 feet by 5 feet, contains 30 square panes of glass, each pane having a circular space whose diameter is one fourth of the side. What is the area of the glass, allowing one-fourth of an inch of framework that separates the panes?

95. ENIGMA.

I am at heart as hard as steel can be.
Or harder even—from the earth was brought;
The richest ladies oft carry me,
For only by riches may I be bought;
Though precious, you will find me much the same
As half-burned wood, upon the British crown;
I have a station, that is known to fame;
Like a new dress, I am admired when shown;
Like to a candle, I can give you light;
Like to the sky, am clear when it is day;
Like to a star, I'm brilliant in the night;
Like to a sea, have water, as they say;
And, like a pure and stainless reputation,
And held by people in great estimation.

96. CONUNDRUMS.

1. Why is bodily suffering like a peninsula?

2. What part of the earth reminds one of a sportive though degenerate dog?

3. Why might Great Britain be justly characterized as destitute of strength?

97. DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

The primals if you upwards take,
And read the finals down,
Before you then they will display
Two sculptors of renown.

1. From the battle this first one reveals,
The Dutch soldiers "did take to their heels."

2. A legendary king; he had
Two daughters, who did drive him mad.

3. A rich city of Spain is here shown,
Which for fruits and a wine is well known.

4. A Greek historian was he,
And famed, too, for philosophy,

6. You may this on Arabia find:
Of a prophet it will you remind.

6. In chronicles his name you'll see;
As a musician famed is he.

7. If to "Gulliver's Travels" you turn,
The high title of honor may learn.

ANSWERS.

78. Short Charades.—1. Justice; 2. Captain; 3. Massacre; 4. Arklow.

79. Towns.—1. Co-pen-hag-en; 2. Lass-a; 3. Don-gola (goal); 4. Phil-adelphi-a; 5. Dun-kirk; 6. Francis-co; 7. Amster-(stream) dam; 8. Ham-burg (grub); 9. Rag-us-a; 10. T-orne-a; 11. War-anger; 12. Palm-yra (ayr).

80. Double Arithmorem.—Geoffrey Chaucer, Canterbury Tales, thus: GranatiC, EmbA, OxidatioN, FirmamenT, FictilE, RemembranceR, ElB, YoU, CellulaR, HumanitY, AcaulescenT, UniteA, CameL, EvaporatE, RecipientS.

81. Charades.—1. Gladness; 2. Blue Bell.

82.—Anagrams.—1. The Marquis of Lorne; 2. Prince Louis of Hesse; 3. The Duke of Wellington; 4. The Solicitor-General; 5. The Postmaster-General; 6. Walter Raleigh; 7. The Right Honorable John Bright; 8. Sir Antonio Vandyke; 9. Sir Roger Tichborne, Baronet.

83 Charades.—1. Dinares; 2. Dissen-sion; 3. Perse-cute.

84. Double Arithmorem.—Pelagic, Pipe-fish, Silvery, Polyneme, thus: PalmaS, EmpoII, LiverpooL, AlaV(a), GefIE, IlchesteR, ChamberY, PlumP, IagO, PascaL, EnemY, FormatioN, IlfracombE, StorM, HavrE.

85. Charade.—Fort-night.

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

Plasters.—Mustard plasters should be mixed with the white of an egg, and they will burn without blistering.

To cure neuralgia, take the bark of the peach tree, pound it and steep in water. Hold the face over it, so as to thoroughly bathe it in the ascending steam. It is a certain cure.

Ostrich Feathers.—Old ostrich feathers can be made to look as well as new by steaming them, and then drawing each vane of the feathers separately over a knife, to curl it.

The addition of a small quantity of boric acid to milk retards the separation of cream, and the milk does not become sour when kept several days. Beer also, to which boric acid has been added, does not so quickly become hard.

Cleaning Metals.—To clean metals, mix half a pint of refined neats'-foot oil and half a gill of spirits of turpentine. Scrape a little kernel or rotten stone, wet a woollen rag in the oil and turpentine, dip it into the scraped kernel, and rub the metal well. Wipe it off with a soft cloth, and polish with a dry leather.

Tragacanth Mucilage.—The Boston *Journal of Chemistry* adds the following to the many receipts of making mucilage: Take of powdered tragacanth, 1 drachm; glycerine, 6 drachms; water, enough to make in all 10 ounces. Rub the tragacanth in a mortar with the glycerine and then add the water. This will produce a mucilage at once of excellent quality.

To Make Hair Curl.—The method employed by professional workers in hair is as follows: Wet the hair to be curled, wrap it smoothly around a cylindrical stick or tube of proper size, tie it in place, then put it in water and boil it two or three hours, remove it from the boiler, wrap it carefully in newspaper and bake it in a moderate oven for an hour. Thus treated, it will stay in curl permanently.

As a simple method of detecting adulteration of wine, into a small quantity of the wine to be tested, says *Le Temps*, drop a peace of potash. If no deposit is formed, and the wine assumes a greenish tint, it has not been artificially colored. If, however, a violet deposit appears, elder or mulberries have been used. If the deposit be red, campeachy wood; if violet blue, privet berries; if clear blue, coloring matter obtained from sunflowers.

A Thought for Cigar Smokers.—A good cigar costs on an average 10 cents; a moderate smoker uses three a day. Three cigars a day, at 10 cents apiece, amount in a year to $109.50, a sum sufficient to purchase the nucleus of a fine library. Placed at interest at six per cent it would amount in six years to over $150. Thus invested it does not destroy an otherwise sweet breath, waste nervous energy, perfume the family or personal wardrobe, nor create an appetite for stimulus which leads to indulgence in strong drink.

Carpets.—The wear of carpets greatly depends upon the manner in which they are kept clean; if the dust is suffered to accumulate too long, they require to be beaten with much force, which breaks the threads. In some cases they are scoured; but this is very apt to injure their texture. It is important to the preservation of carpets that the boards of the floor be well laid. As soon as a carpet begins to wear, its position in the room should be altered, so that every part may be worn alike.

Still another mode of curing corns is offered. If a single one, of the thousands suggested, were really effective, we could dispense with the rest. But, so far as we know, going barefoot is the only sure cure. Dr. Barbier, says the Lyons *Medical Journal*, reports the cure of the most refractory corns by the morning and evening application, with a brush of a drop of a solution of the per-chloride of iron. After a fortnight's continued application, without pain, a patient who had suffered martyrdom for nearly forty years from a most painful corn on the inner side of each little toe, was entirely relieved. Pressure was no longer painful, and Dr. B. believed the cure radical. Two other similar cases were equally successful.

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HUMOROUS SCRAPS.

Which is the ugliest hood ever worn?—Falsehood.

All but oarsmen are content with single sculls.

What is taken from you before you get it?—Your photograph.

What length ought a lady's petticoat to be? A little above two feet.

One of those things no fellow can find out—a good husband after 11 P. M.

Who was the straightest man in the Bible? Joseph—because Pharaoh made a ruler of him.

A Young lady went into a music shop and asked the clerk if he had "Loving Eyes." He replied, "I'm told so by the girls."

A Doctor went out for a day's hunting, and on returning complained that he didn't kill anything. "That's because you didn't attend to your legitimate business," said his wife.

An old minister asked a woman what could be done to induce her husband to attend church. "I don't know," she replied, "unless you were to put a pipe and a jug of whisky in the pew."

A Pennsylvania editor has written a poem, called "Joys we have tasted," and what seems strange and inexplicable to his friends, he does not mention whisky, hot rum, or anything that way. But, maybe, the poem is "to be continued." It is certainly incomplete as it stands.

When Madame Schneider was engaged for an opera bouffe season recently, the manager demurred to her exorbitant terms, remarking that her income would be higher than that of a Marshal of France. "Well, then," said she, "get a Marshal of France to sing for you."

Good talkers are becoming rare nowadays, but are occasionally to be met with. Of one whose conversation is very entertaining but rather disconnected, a witty lady once remarked, "Oh yes, he's very clever, but he talks like a book in which there are leaves occasionally missing."

There is one word of which four others can be made, which alternate curiously between the genders. "Heroine" is, perhaps, as peculiar a word as any in our language. The first two letters of it are male, the first three female, the first four a brave man, and the whole a brave woman.

At an infant Sunday School the teacher gave the Bible Story of the "Prodigal Son." When he came to the place where the poor ragged son reached his former home, and his father saw him a "great way off," he inquired what his father probably did. One of the smallest boys, with his fist clenched, said: "I donno, but I dessay he set the dog on him."

A Young lady, who had recently returned from the island of Madeira, where she had been for her health, was met by a friend, who, after the usual greeting, said, "I hope your trip has done you good: I must say you are not looking amiss after it."—"O! I feel much better, thank you; but I am still a miss for all that," was the reply.

A Chicago Jenkins wrote rapturously of the toilet of a particular lady in the jubilee ball. It subsequently appeared that many a lady there was dressed far more elegantly. Moreover, the lady he named was not in full toilet. She was not, in fact, at the ball, being in Europe on that occasion. With this trifling error excepted, Jenkins was right.

Recently, in a street car in Philadelphia, an old gentleman was seated in one corner, and the car was full. A bevy of fair ones, of all ages and weights, swarmed in, and there were no seats. Whereupon the gallant old gentleman said aloud, "Ladies, I shall be most happy to give my seat to any one of you who is over thirty-two years of age." All remained standing.

EXCHANGE!

Togswell (in the Washing Room at the Office, proceeding to dress for the De Browney's Dinner-Party). "Hullo! What the Dooce"—*(Pulling out, in dismay, from black bag, a pair of blue flannel Tights, a pink striped Jersey, and a spiked canvas Shoe.)*—"Confound it! Yes!—I must have taken that Fellow's Bag who said he was going to the Athletic Sports this Afternoon, and he's got mine with my Dress Clothes!!"

DE MORTUIS.

Sympathetic Young Mother. "A' wunner ye could be sae Cruel as tae Kill that bonnie wee Cauf!"

Practical Butcher. "Weel, ye see, ye'll no Eat them leevin'!"

SOMETHING LIKE A HINT!

Middy (thinking to astonish the Natives). Well, Pat, can you see anything with that Glass?

Pat. 'Deed I can, Sor. An' don't'ee think it brings Dennis's Whiskey Still so close it makes ye moity Dhey.

BEAUTY AND THE B——ST.

Hobbs. Observation goes to show that Woman is the most Beautiful of Creatures.

Dobbs. Yes; but all Nature proves that Man is the Superior Animal.

"SAVED FROM THE FLOOD," BY F. W. TOPHAM.

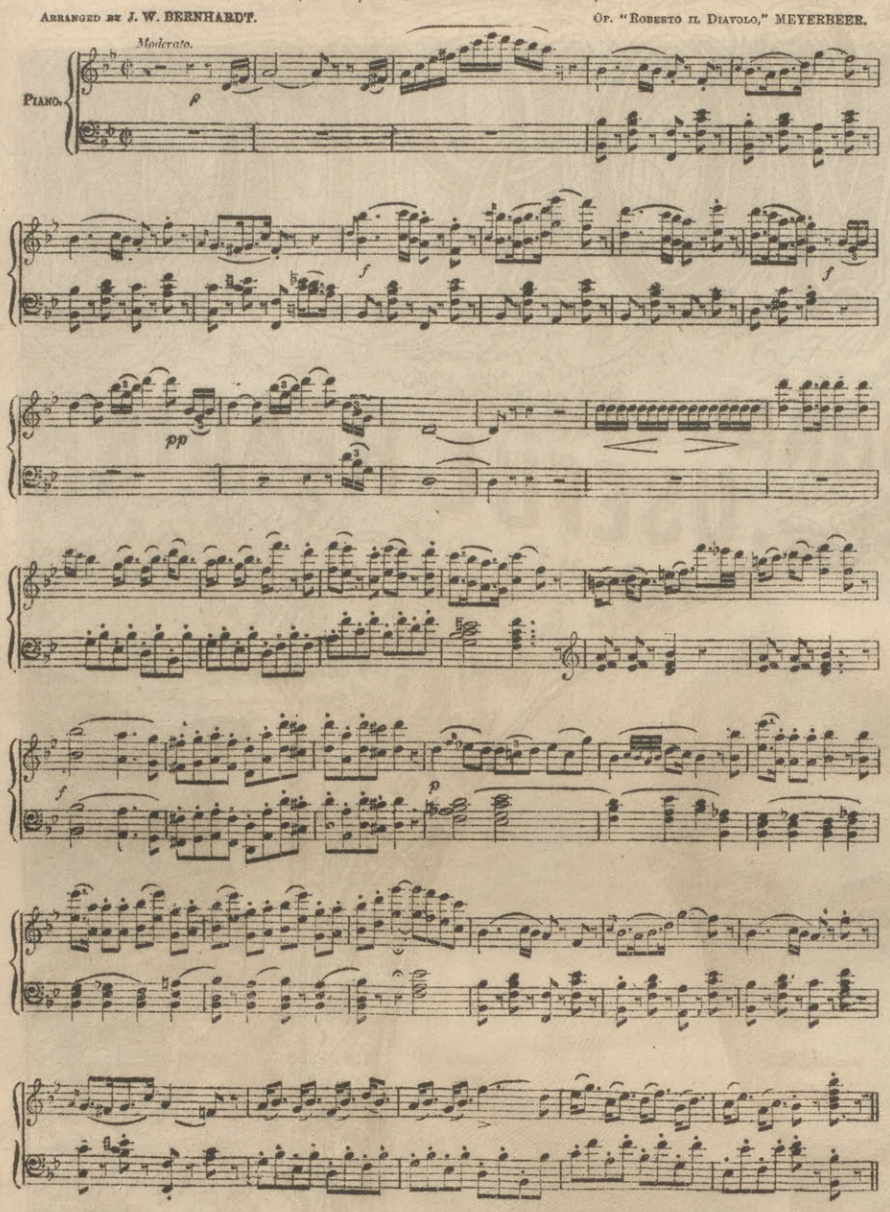
IN THE EXHIBITION OF THE SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS.

"When I Left Dear Normandy."

("*QUAND JE QUITTAI LA NORMANDY.*")

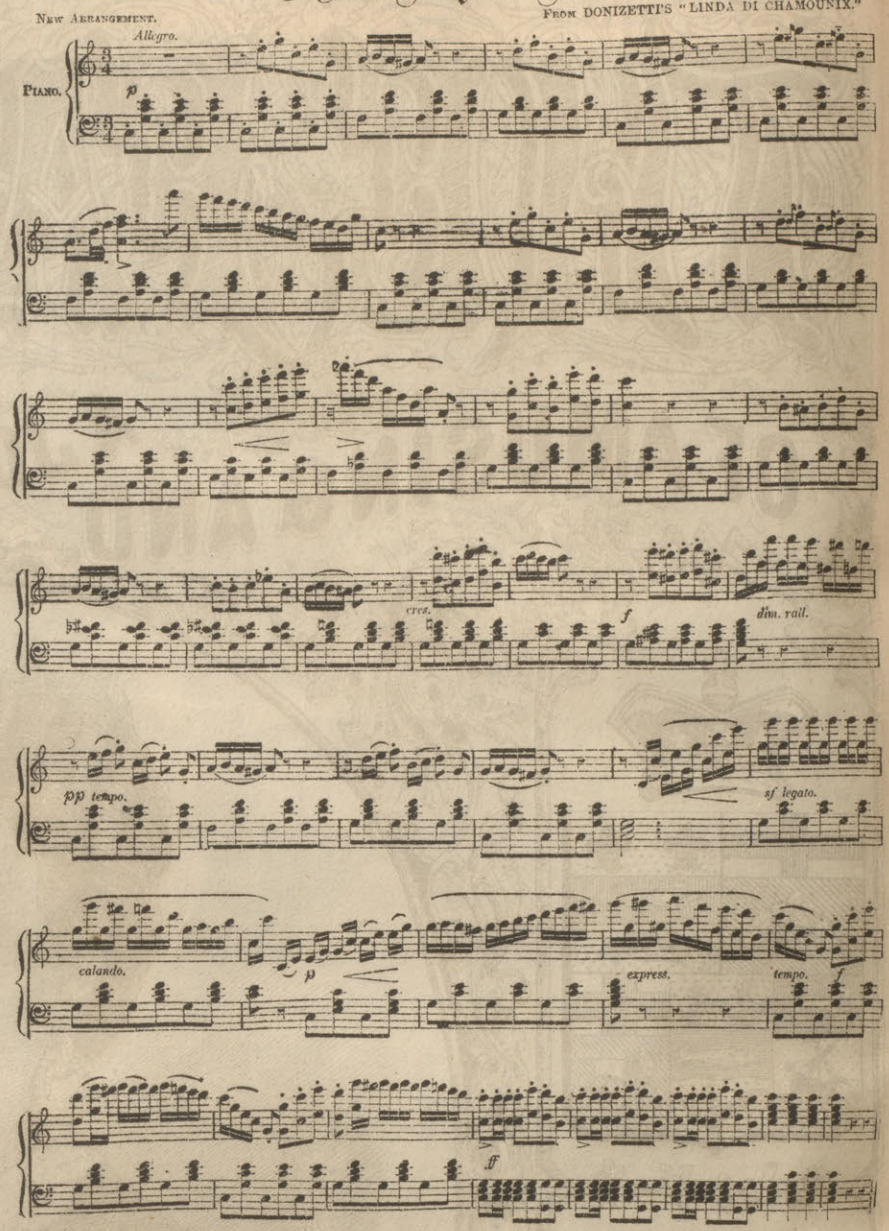
ARRANGED BY J. W. BERNHARDT.

OP. "ROBERTO IL DIAVOLO," MEYERBEER.



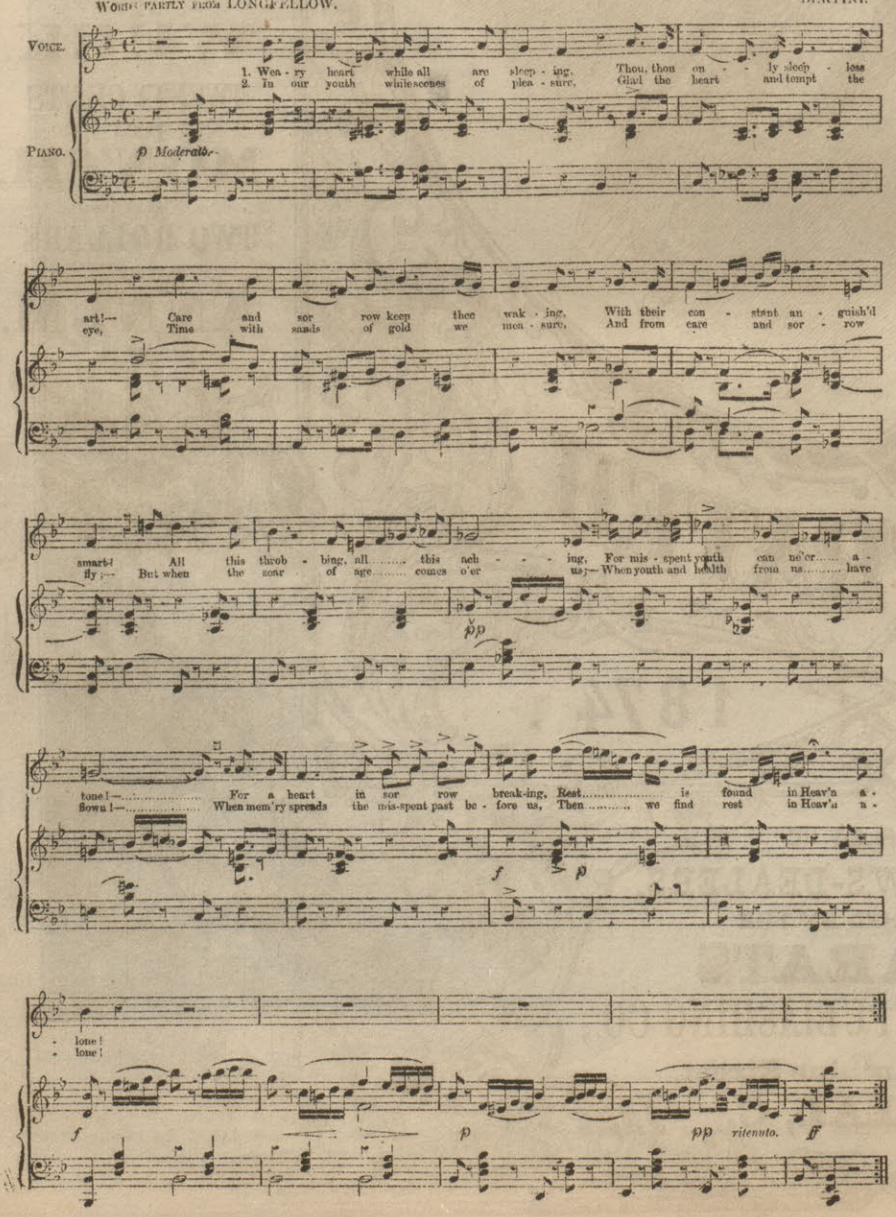
O Luce Di Quest' Anima.

NEW ARRANGEMENT.

FROM DONIZETTI'S "LINDA DI CHAMOUNIX."

Weary Heart.

WORDS PARTLY FROM LONGFELLOW.

BERTINI.



HOMMAGE À LA RUSSIE MAZURKA.

EDWIN EVANS, F.C.O., *Musical Editor.*